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Grinnell, Iowa,
Oct. 20, 1897.



"IT ONLY NEEDS NEW PROPS."—PAGE 75.

OLD BENCHES WITH NEW PROPS.

BY

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"ALL FOR MONEY," "FROM FATHER TO SON," "THE BREWERY AT
TAYLORVILLE," "THE BREWER'S FORTUNE," "WEALTH AND
WINE," "AUNT DINAH'S PLEDGE," "OLD TIMES," "OUT
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OLD BENCHES WITH NEW PROPS.

CHAPTER I.

EAGLE POINT.

TAMSON BRENNER stood in the observatory, looking off upon a wintry landscape which gleamed and glittered in the sunlight of a clear March day. A week of mild weather had softened and packed the snow, which later had frozen to a solid, unyielding mass, thus offering to the pedestrian a delightful opportunity for out-of-door enjoyment.

All this the observer noted, and then with a lingering gaze at the distant mountains, descended the stairs leading to her point of observation, and presently met her father in the family sitting-room, when he asked anxiously:

“Have you told your mother?”

“No, sir; I have not,” she replied. “She is complaining more than usual this morning; and besides, I do not feel quite equal to the occasion. I want time to think the matter over. If you can do without me here at home I will

go up to Eagle Point and spend the day. The long walk will do me good, and everything always seems clearer after I have talked it over with Cousin Prudence."

"Then go, child. I shall miss you, but in the days to come we shall need all the strength and wisdom you can gain. Your mother will probably stay in her room, and Ann need not mind about me. I shall not care for dinner."

"I have already given orders for your dinner, and I shall not leave you unless you promise to eat it. You must not give way so," exclaimed the young girl, throwing her arms around her father's neck. "If you will only help me, we can go through and keep a home for ourselves; if not here, in some other place. It does not require much to make a home, if only those we love are with us."

"I shall always have a home, my child, so long as you and your mother are with me; but it is hard for an old man to see the last of his possessions in the hands of strangers."

"I am one of your possessions, father. Would you not rather relinquish this place to Clyde Stafford than give me away to him?"

"A thousand times rather, Tamson. I could not bear to see you his wife."

"Yet he may count his wealth by millions. He says he is sure of it."

"Ill-gotten gains, sure to bring a curse to all who share in them. I do not envy him, let come what will to me. If I was younger I should not mind it so much; but I am old and broken. I have no courage to begin over again. When a man has counted three-score years and ten, he is ready to be laid on the shelf. I never thought to come to this. If I had dreamed of such misfortune, I would have lived alone to the day of my death."

"Would you have been happier, father?"

"No, my child; but I should not have made others unhappy. Your mother has found this place dreary and lonely. What will she do when we are forced to leave it for one less desirable? And you, Tamson? I think of you."

"Never mind me, father. Give me time to look the situation fairly in the face, and you will have no reason to pity me. We shall do very well. I am sure of that. We cannot expect mother to look at things as we do, but we can make her comfortable; and I have sometimes thought that a great emergency would develop unlooked-for strength in her.

"In any event, Cousin Prudence will teach me economy, and we have plenty for all present needs. We can remain here a year longer, and in that time something may transpire for our advantage."

"We must give up the place, Tamson. There is no other way; and if I must leave it, the sooner I go the better. I would go to-morrow if I could. This has been 'The Brenner Place' for more than a hundred years, and I hoped it would be kept in the family for another hundred, but everything has gone against me."

"Not everything, father. You have not lost faith in God!"

"Not for long at a time; but this last blow has nearly crushed me. The mortgage here has always troubled me, although I hoped to clear it. Now we have fallen into the toils of a man who will show no mercy, but will take pleasure in humiliating us. I would not have believed Stafford to be so vindictive. His friends claim that he is generous and kind-hearted, ready to do his part in contributing to the best interests of the town. He must be very angry. Did you give him any reason for rejecting him?"

"I told him I did not love him, and when he asked me to take time for consideration, I told him nothing could change my decision. It was enough for me that my heart had rejected him."

"Was anything said of his business?"

"He spoke of it. He knows that you were opposed to his coming here, and that you con-

demn his business. He told me that, after he knew my decision was final. But don't let us talk of him, father. If I am going to Eagle Point it is time for me to be on the way."

"Yes, child, it is. I wish I could go with you, but I am not equal to so long a walk; and, besides, it would hardly be right for us both to leave your mother. You will tell her in the morning."

"Yes, sir; I will. By that time I shall have some plan to submit to you, and I am sure I can make mother see what is best. Leave it all to me, father, and don't be unhappy while I am away."

Tamson Brenner spoke cheerfully, that she might comfort her father, although she felt sadly troubled. It was in search of comfort and counsel that she started on the long walk which was to bring her to the old couple who dwelt alone on the sunny slope of the mountain.

Two miles as the crow flies, five miles by the carriage road, and three miles by the summer path through field and forest, every rod of which had been familiar to her since she was a "wee girlie."

On this morning she could choose her own way, and when she had left her home behind her the sense of freedom and the exhilaration of the clear, bracing air inspired her with hope

and courage. Whatever might come to her in the future, there was, for this hour, a respite from trouble.

She heard the chickadees singing their merry song, and the blue-jays screaming in the depths of the woods. Life was full and strong and glad; and by the time she reached her destination all things seemed possible to her.

Cousin Prudence was standing in the porch, waiting to receive her and give her hearty welcome.

"I expected you," said the good woman. "I told Jacob when I first looked out this morning that you would come up to-day. Come in and sit down in the kitchen while I do up my work."

"Let me stay in the kitchen all day," replied the visitor. "No other place will suit me so well. It is the pleasantest room in the house."

"That is what everybody says, and Jacob and I are so used to staying here when we are alone, that we feel more at home here. Are you tired?"

"I was very tired when I left home, but I am rested now. It rested me just to think of coming here and having a good, long talk with you."

"Then we shall both have a resting day; for the sight of a bright, young face like yours,

always rests me. How is the mother this morning?"

"Complaining a little more than usual."

"And the father?"

"Troubled and discouraged. Do you know?"

"Yes; we had company yesterday, and they told us something we couldn't quite believe was true. They said Clyde Stafford had bought the mortgage on your father's place and would push his claim as far as the law would allow. They said, too, that he did it because you refused to marry him, and I said that anything was better than your marrying such a man as he is."

"I never had any idea of marrying him."

"I don't suppose you had, but everybody thinks he wanted to marry you; and if he can't have his own way about things, he calculates to punish the ones who oppose him. He has a good many to punish, too, and the worst of it is, there are some who will be willing to help him. Jacob felt as though he must go right down and talk with your father this morning. He is taking care of the chickens, but he will be in to see you before long."

"Chickens so early, Cousin Prudence?"

"Oh, yes; the earlier the better price they bring; and we depend a good deal on our eggs and chickens. When Jacob gets to work on

the land, I look after them, but now he can do it. We try to make the most of what we have."

"And you succeed admirably. Father says you know how to turn everything to good account, and that is just what I wish to learn. Our place, large as it is, has never given us half so much as you get from yours. It has been ornamental rather than useful. Now that I have begun to think of it, it seems to me we ought to have a good income from our orchards and fields."

"Your place used to be called the most productive farm anywhere about here. Your great-grandfather made money on it, and so did your grandfather. They were counted rich. It didn't take as much then to make a man rich as it does now, but they were independent and able to live as well as they wanted to. It was thought a great honor, all the country 'round, to be invited to visit at the Brenner place.

"There was a harvest festival every fall after the crops were gathered. The husking was done then, and everybody was invited for the whole day, with plenty to eat and drink."

"From what I have heard I think there must have been more than a plenty to drink."

"I presume there was, Tamson; but people didn't understand about drinking liquor as they

do now. If anybody got beyond what was thought proper, he was put out of sight. What folks called hard drinking never was allowed there, and your grandfather was one of the first to give up liquor altogether."

"How did he make money on his farm?"

"In every way, I was going to say. He had large herds of cattle, and large flocks of sheep, and horses and colts. Then he always kept a great many bees, and sold his honey at the highest market price. There was plenty of white clover and bass-wood for the bees to feed on, and he knew just how to manage them. There were turkeys and chickens and ducks and geese, all bringing in something every year. Then there was the dairy, where the best of butter and cheese was made."

"There must have been a great deal of hard work done."

"There was, but there was plenty of help to do it, so that nobody felt it to be a burden."

"I wish father had stayed on the farm. It would have been better for him."

"I don't know about that, Tamson. Your father didn't like farming. He thought the city was the place for him, and he made money there. I was sorry when he lost so much, but it better be through somebody else's dishonesty

than his own. I suppose that discouraged him ; and Herbert's death coming so soon afterward broke him down. But there, child ; there's a Providence in all these things, and the Lord knows what is best for us, whether we can see it or not."

CHAPTER II.

THE BRENNER PLACE.

WHEN Jacob Hill came in from caring for his chickens he was glad to see Tamson ; more glad, perhaps, than he would have been to see her father ; since, as he had said that very morning, he should look to her to retrieve the family fortunes. He had spent a large part of the night in considering ways and means for their present relief ; and, although not sure of success, he believed he could accomplish it.

“ If Luke Brenner was like his father he would go to work, old as he is, and teach Clyde Stafford a lesson. Then, again, if he had a wife like his mother, she would help him. As it is, Tamson is their only dependence. She has always had everything done for her, without having to think where the money came from to do it ; but if I ain’t mistaken, she is made of the right stuff.”

With this expression of her husband’s opinion Cousin Prudence fully agreed ; and now here was the girl before him eager for advice, and ready to accept it gratefully. For a time,

however, they talked of chickens and the expected profits.

"So far they are all doing well, and I don't see why we can't do well with them," he remarked. "If I had as good a place for them as you have, I'd go in for two or three hundred. There is always call for more than can be supplied, and, if you have good luck, they pay better than anything else that needs no more capital. You and Ann might manage chickens."

"I don't know anything about managing them," answered Tamson. "Now I am obliged to think of it, it seems to me I don't know how to manage anything."

"You can learn," was replied. "How are your strawberry beds?"

"They ought to be in good condition. Father had them reset last fall, and they have been covered with snow all winter."

"Are the plum-trees all alive?"

"They were last year."

"And the pear-trees?"

"Yes, sir, but last year was not the year for many pears. There must be a great many this year."

"I don't suppose your father ever sold a bushel of pears in his life."

"I never heard of any being sold."

"And I don't suppose any apples have been

sold either, 'though you've got the best apple orchard I know of. Some folks, with your place, would sell hundreds of dollars worth of fruit every year, and have more left than they'd know what to do with. The money might come in small sums, but it would count just the same in the end."

"Why didn't you tell me about it before, Cousin Jacob? I never thought of it, and now we are going to leave, it is too late."

"You have a year longer to stay, anyway, and a great deal can be done in a year."

"But father says he shall leave as soon as he can find a house to live in."

"He must do no such thing. Stay where you are as long as you can, and do the best you can. Has your father any money on hand?"

"I don't know. He never talks about his money affairs any more than he is obliged to. Mother does not know that the place is mortgaged."

"I don't see how your father can have much money."

"I have not asked him for any this long time. I have a few dollars he gave me at Christmas, but I don't need to spend it on myself. We have plenty of everything, too, in the house, so we shall need very little money, unless we have the expense of moving."

"You won't have that this year, mark my words, Tamson, and be sure to talk your father into more reason. Stafford has money, and we can't hinder his having a brewery here, but he can't control everybody. Your father can be made to see how things really are. If you have to leave the old Brenner place—mind you, I don't believe it will come to that—get all you can off from it while you stay. You ain't used to work, but you can learn; and I want you to show Clyde Stafford what you can do. People won't think any better of him for showing his spite the way he has. There's a good deal of talk about it, and all but his special friends are ready to help you. If I had the money to take up the mortgage your father should have it, and maybe I can bring it 'round before the year is up. You can trust Ann, can't you?"

"Yes, sir; she can be trusted to the end of the chapter. If it hadn't been for her, I don't know what we should have done through the winter. She is devoted to mother, and mother depends upon her more than upon father or me."

"Tell her just how you are situated, and see if she does not prove herself equal to the emergency. She seems to be both strong and willing."

"She is. She is ready to do anything in the

house or out-of-doors. She would help me in any way possible."

"You have a cow?"

"Yes, sir; we have two Jersey cows, so we have plenty of milk."

"And butter too?"

"I think father has bought our butter through the winter."

"You ought to be selling butter instead of buying. You and Ann must learn to make butter."

Tamson Brenner was accustomed to Jacob Hill's plain manner of speaking, so that she was neither surprised nor annoyed at his abrupt questions. She understood his purpose, and said pleasantly:

"You are giving me some lessons in a way I shall remember."

"I am trying to have you see for yourself what might be done on the Brenner place to earn money in small ways. Your father made his money in what he would call large ways, and it was all right, too, as long as it lasted. It ain't to be expected he can change very much at his time of life; but if wife and I had the management of the place, I believe we could clear it in five years.

"You'll wonder likely by this time, if we can plan so well for other folks, why we hain't got

more beforehand for ourselves. I don't often talk about it, but it won't hurt anybody now for you to know there was a black sheep in my father's flock. Before we came to Eagle Point we paid up a heavier mortgage than there is on the Brenner place; paid it, too, because we tried to help somebody who wouldn't try to help himself.

"We run in debt for all but fifty dollars on this place, and there's been a drain on us other folks hain't seen ever since. We've cleared the place, though, and now we are going to try and lay up something against the time when we can't work."

"Does father know about it?" asked Tamson.

"He knows something about it, but we never talk about it. If my wife wasn't one of the very best women in the world, she would have found fault with the way things have gone, instead of helping me and keeping me from being discouraged."

"Then there was danger of your being discouraged, Cousin Jacob?"

"There was, because I never knew what was before me; and, besides, I wasn't always sure what was my duty. I wanted to do all I ought to."

"And so you did more than you ought to."

"I don't know, Tamson. I've wondered about it a good many times; but you don't want to hear about other folks' troubles, when you are looking for help to carry your own."

"I think it will do me good to know that other people have troubles they are bearing bravely. You and Cousin Prudence always seem so happy, I supposed everything went right with you."

"Complaining would only make the matter worse, and no one could help us. We had to bear it alone. It is different with you. You can be helped."

"There's good timber on your father's place that ought to be cut, and a market can be found for it near home. It hurts me to think of the place going out of the family. You must save it."

"I would try if anybody else held the mortgage, but I can never ask a favor of Clyde Stafford."

"We won't ask any favors of him. If the mortgage is paid, with all back interest, he will be obliged to give up his claim. Anyway, you go on just as though you expected to stay there a hundred years, and see what comes. You've got the best part of the town on your side. If Myers had lived, Stafford never would have got hold of that mortgage; but the heirs wanted their money, and so sold to the man who was ready to pay it."

"Father says the place is worth a great deal more than the mortgage."

"Certainly it is, and if well taken care of it will gain in value every year. There is a market now for everything that can be raised on a farm. I will sell for you all the butter you can make, and all the eggs and chickens you can raise. Two Jersey cows, well managed, ought to bring you in quite a nice little sum.

"You need a good family in the house by the spring instead of Armstrong. He is a lazy, shiftless fellow; and if he don't steal everything he can lay his hands on, it is because he is afraid of the law. I hear he is going to work in the brewery, and that will finish him. I wish you would persuade your father to send him adrift."

"If he goes, there must be some one to take his place. Father depends on him to do the work at the barn and prepare wood for the fires."

"Some one else can do that. I will find a man you can depend on; one that will have some interest in the farm too."

"I wish you would talk with father, Cousin Jacob; I know he would be glad of your advice."

"He shall have it, if I think he will take it right; but advice is something most folks don't want."

"It is what I want. I came up here for advice. I wish you to tell me what to do and how

to do it. If I could only have you and Cousin Prudence with me for a week or two, it seems as though I might gain knowledge and courage too."

"Prudence might go down and stay with you a week. I don't know anything to hinder; and in that time she could see how things ought to go, if there wouldn't anybody think she was meddling."

"Everybody would be thankful to have her there, and thankful for her meddling too. Ann thinks Cousin Prudence is a wonderful woman, and will be glad of any advice from her. Ann was used to milking and helping about cheese-making, before she came to this country. She knew more about work out-of-doors than in the house."

"So much the better for you, if you are ready to undertake to make the farm pay. She will be more willing to help you out-of-doors."

"I am willing to undertake anything that is honest and will help my father and mother. It will kill father if he has to leave the old place."

"He will not leave it. You are going to keep it for him. The more I think of it, the surer I am. But you must begin the work right away. You must set your hens early."

As this was said, Tamson Brenner laughed heartily, yet none the less did she take the lesson to heart.

CHAPTER III.

MRS. BYAM.

"COUSIN PRUDENCE, you are to have another visitor," said Tamson Brenner, a little before noon. "There is a woman coming by the big pines."

"It is Mrs. Byam," replied Cousin Prudence, after looking for a moment at the slightly stooping figure of a woman making her way over the snow. "It is Mrs. Byam, and if I was alone I should be very glad to see her."

"Be glad now. I have made sure of the advice for which I came, and I will try not to spoil either your visit or mine. I have heard father speak of her as being a bright, intelligent woman, who has had a hard time in life, and I should like to be better acquainted with her than I am."

"She is all your father says, and more too. She is a good woman, and your father hasn't a better friend in town than she is. He helped her years ago, and she ain't one to forget a favor. He helped her boy, as she always calls

Thaddeus Byam, her grandson, and she loves that boy a good deal better than she loves herself."

"He has invented some machinery that promises to be very useful."

"Yes; he is the one, and folks say he will make his fortune out of the invention. I don't see how he ever kept still long enough to invent anything; but he is a smart man, and as good to his grandmother as he can be. She don't want for anything he can get for her. But there she is," and Mrs. Hill hastened to welcome her old friend.

"I declare I'm tired," said this friend, grasping cordially the hand extended to her. "It must be I ain't quite so spry as I used to be; but I heard some news this morning, and I couldn't rest till I'd been up here and talked it over with you. They say Clyde Stafford has bought the mortgage on the Brenner place and foreclosed on it. Do you suppose that is really so?"

"I suppose it is. Tamson is here, and she says it is so."

"Well, now, I never. If she says so, there can't be any mistake about it. I was in hopes there was. If I'd known she was here I wouldn't spoken out so loud. But it's my way to say the first thing that comes into my mind, and be

earnest about it too. I was in a hurry to get here on that account."

Mrs. Byam was ushered into the kitchen, where she greeted Tamson Brenner cordially, although it was easy to see that she was somewhat embarrassed at the meeting.

Mr. Hill came in soon after, when they began talking of ventures in farming and comparing experiences, each being interested in whatever promised larger returns or increased profits.

"Our summer visitors leave a good deal of money behind them, and if they were all of the right sort we should be better off for their coming. But there has been one family here I wish had gone somewhere else. I wish that Stafford set had never heard of our town, and if a good many others that are all took up with them now don't wish so before they are ten years older, I am mistaken.

"Some of our farmers are so foolish they expect to make heaps of money raising barley; and it's likely there'll be plenty of barley-fields and plenty of beer-drinkers too. They'll find there are two sides to that story.

"It stirs me up so, I can't hardly keep still about it, when I meet any of the men that favored Stafford's coming here. Josiah Black will live to rue the day when he sold land to build a brewery on. He has got four boys, and

there's no danger but what they'll learn to drink beer."

"There's no danger but things will be bad enough," responded Jacob Hill. "I've said and done all I could to prevent our town being so cursed; and now it's settled to come, I'm going to fight it tooth and nail.

"Our folks don't know much about beer, and Stafford has a smooth tongue. Then there are a good many mortgaged farms in town, and their owners are ready to jump at anything that promises to bring in money."

"It's my opinion, Mr. Hill, that when Stafford gets fairly settled here he'll calculate to rule the town."

"No doubt of it, Mrs. Byam, and he'll have a good deal of influence. He will employ a good many hands, and they will all be expected to work for his interests. Of course, Clyde Stafford's father backs him up. That is understood; and if the son is as unprincipled as the father, there's no telling the amount of mischief that may be done."

Some further criticisms were made in regard to this capitalist, and then other interests engrossed attention.

Mrs. Byam's grandson provided for her so generously that she had no need to calculate or economize; yet, as she said, it was born in her

to make everything count for all it was worth. So she had her bees and chickens, the care of which gave her real pleasure, while the profits gave her a feeling of independence.

She and Jacob Hill often consulted together about their small industries, and on this occasion some new plans were discussed; to all of which Tamson Brenner listened eagerly, asking now and then a question that she might better apply the knowledge thus gained.

It was still early when she left Eagle Point, so there was ample time for Mrs. Byam to express the regret and indignation which had been gathering force since she heard of the new misfortune which had befallen Mr. Brenner.

"I tell you, I heard the clock strike every hour last night," she exclaimed, when Tamson had gone. "I was planning how I could help them folks, and I guess I can fetch it 'round. There's Thad now expecting to make a good deal of money right off, and when he comes home I'm meaning to lay the case before him."

"Is he coming home this summer?"

"That's what he wrote in his last letter. He said he was coming to stay a month or two, and be a boy again. I expect, maybe, he's tired of so much iron work; planning all the time, and maybe worrying over his new machine."

"He has turned out well. You must feel paid for all you ever did for him."

"I do; but there was one spell when I didn't know but what I was making trouble for myself; but the Lord interposed in my behalf. He sent somebody to help me, and there ain't a better boy anywhere than mine is, if I do say it. He feels bad to have a brewery here. He says it's the worst thing that ever happened to the town."

"So Jacob says; and he says it is just putting a mortgage on all the boys and girls, besides a good many grown folks."

"It is that, and the mortgages are going to hold, too, for all eternity. Thad says the greatest trouble with men he has worked with comes from their drinking so much beer.

"It's a shame for Yankees to take up with the stuff. I believe it's worse than the New England rum everybody used to drink; that kept half the men poor that drank it, and made the men rich that sold it."

Mrs. Byam had seen much of this poverty. She could talk by the hour of families she had known in which fathers, husbands, and brothers had fallen victims to the demon of alcohol. There had been dark days when she waited in her lonely home, shivering with cold and hunger, while the money which should have

purchased for her food and clothing went to swell the rum-seller's gains.

As she talked she seemed to live over again the days so fraught with anxious forebodings; yet over and above all was her sympathy and anxiety for Luke Brenner.

Of his wife she knew little, except that everybody wondered a bachelor of fifty should marry a young girl of twenty. That he loved her, no one who saw them together could for a moment doubt. He denied her nothing it was in his power to grant. So far as possible he had shielded her from every care, and now that he was a poor man, it was of his wife and daughter he thought rather than of himself.

He might have depended upon his son had the boy lived, but it was only within a few days that the possibility of finding help in Tamson had suggested itself to him. That she was unlike her mother he had always known, although there had been little in her life to develop marked characteristics.

He was standing by a window looking toward Eagle Point, when he saw her in the distance, walking rapidly, as if in haste to reach home. He met her at the door, when, after an exchange of affectionate greetings, she asked :

"Do you know how to manage bees?"

"I used to know," he replied. "When I was

a boy I could always do anything I pleased with bees. They never stung me. This was a good place for bees, too, with so many linden trees."

"The lindens are here now, father."

"Yes; and there are some hives of bees, but I never heard of any honey being taken from them last year."

"It may have been taken without your knowledge."

This remark led to a long conversation, in which Tamson Brenner repeated the advice and suggestions of her cousins. She succeeded also in inspiring her father with something of her own brave spirit.

"I feel as though I had lived ten years since I went from home this morning, and if you will stay here as long as you can, I will do everything in my power to help redeem the place," she said brightly.

"It shall be as you wish," answered her father. "If your mother could be made happy, I don't know but I could begin over again, old as I am."

"Old, father! You are not old to me. Tomorrow morning I will tell mother all about it, and then we will set to work."

CHAPTER IV.

MISS TAMSON AND ANN.

"MISS TAMSON, will you please come into the kitchen when you can spare time," said Ann, the one servant of the Brenner family. "There's something wrong at the barn every day, and I want a talk with you about it."

"I will go now," was replied, and the young girl followed her companion into the kitchen, where, after both were seated, she asked :

"What is wrong at the barn?"

"Well, miss, there's been cackling, and I've thought all along there must be eggs, but never a one did I get till to-day. The Armstrong man said the hens cackled for fun ; but to-day I kept watch, and I've fifteen nice fresh eggs, and he'll get never a one. He's a thief, Miss Tamson. I've thought it a long time, and now I know. He sold honey last fall, and where would he get it but in the garden?"

"Are you sure he sold honey?"

"I am that, because Dolf Turner told me, and he wouldn't tell a lie any sooner than the master would. Poor as his mother is, he wouldn't take a pin he hadn't a right to. If the master would

send that Armstrong man away from the house by the spring, we'd have eggs and butter in plenty. We get not enough milk from the cows. Too much goes for the milking."

"But Mr. Armstrong has a right to part of the milk."

"Has he a right to the biggest half, Miss Tamson?"

"I think not."

"Then he takes more than his right. Let him go, and let me take care of the barn. I can do it, and don't be offended, Miss Tamson. Dolf says the master is in trouble, and must give up this place to the beer man that's coming."

"The beer man has a claim on it, but he cannot take it for a year, and in that time I hope to earn so much money that we can manage to keep it. Cousin Jacob thinks you and I together might raise some chickens for market."

"We can, Miss Tamson. I had chickens at home, and some hens are ready now to set to hatching."

"Do you know how to manage them?"

"I do, but I can't manage with Mr. Armstrong governing the barn. I can milk and care for the cows; and if I need help, Dolf will help me for anything you will give him to eat. There's little enough goes into his mother's poor rooms."

"Oh, Miss Tamson, let me help you in it all. I've never a friend I love better than the master and mistress, and your own self; and I'd be gladder to help you than do anything else. Give me no wages for a year, and take what I've saved toward paying the debt."

"I don't think we shall be driven to that, Ann, although I thank you a thousand times for your kindness. But if we can plan and work together, I believe we can accomplish something in the way of earning money."

"We can; I am sure of it," said the energetic girl, whose ability and devotion Tamson Brenner now appreciated as never before.

She was quick to comprehend the situation; suggesting one plan after another for making a profit from the farm, and placing them in so favorable a light that they seemed not only wise but feasible.

It was long past midnight when the two separated, yet Tamson was in the kitchen early the next morning. Early as it was, however, Ann had milked the cows, and was then at work in the hen-house, which lately had been unoccupied, and was in no condition to be used.

"We'll be setting the hens now as fast as they are ready; and when the snow is off the ground, and we're sowing and planting, we'll have them all in here, where they'll do no mischief," she

exclaimed triumphantly. "Mr. Armstrong must let me manage it all my own way or I can't do anything," she added presently.

"I will attend to that," was replied. "Mr. Armstrong shall not interfere."

As Mrs. Brenner did not appear at breakfast her daughter went to her room, and without any unnecessary words told her of the mortgage and its foreclosure.

"Father and I don't mind it so much, but we are very sorry for you," said Tamson, holding the small white hands, and pressing her lips to the fair white forehead of her mother. "We will do everything we can for you, and you shall not miss a single comfort we can provide. You will always be first with us."

"I knew there was something your father was keeping from me," Mrs. Brenner answered. "I knew we were no longer rich, and I have thought it all over many times, but I never thought we should be obliged to give up this place. It is dreary and lonely here, but it would about kill your father if he had to leave it, though he never talks to me about his business."

"That is because he is so unwilling to trouble you, mother. He says if he had known he should ever be a poor man, he would have lived alone to the end of his life rather than ask you to share his poverty."

"And you, Tamson, how will you bear poverty?"

"I don't intend to bear poverty. Ann and I intend to provide for the family so generously that we shall forget we are poor."

"You and Ann provide for the family! What can you two do?"

For answer Tamson told their plans, in which, much to her surprise, her mother seemed interested.

"I thank you for telling me just how we are situated," said Mrs. Brenner after a long silence. "I am not used to work, but I shall try not to be a burden. Ask your father to come to me."

What transpired during that interview was not reported, but when, an hour later, Mr. Brenner went into the kitchen where his daughter was at work while Ann was busy elsewhere, he no longer appeared like an old man.

"It is all right, and your mother is a most noble woman," he said confidently. "I believe we can do wonders with the old farm yet."

"Armstrong must go," responded Tamson.

"He shall. I ought to have seen that something was wrong, but I have been too discouraged to look after my affairs as I should. Now I am myself again, and if we can do nothing more, we can live comfortably on the old place for another year."

“And for many years to come, father. Ann and I expect to accomplish wonders. Cousin Prudence is coming to teach us how to make butter. Ann brought in twice as much milk this morning as Armstrong brings, and she is out now looking for eggs. We intend to make the most of our resources, and, if possible, save this dear old place from the clutches of a brewer.”

“You did not tell your mother that Stafford had asked you to be his wife?”

“No, sir; I have told only you of that, although others seem to know it.”

“I told your mother, and she spatted her little hands, just as she always does when she is very much pleased. She said she would rather live on bread and water the rest of her life than have you accept him.”

“She will be spared the alternative.”

“I think she will, my daughter. Ann is a treasure in this exigency.”

“She is. I knew she was devoted to us, but after our talk last evening I shall never think of her again as a servant. In future she is my friend.”

At that moment Ann came in from the barn displaying the eggs she had found, and reporting that Armstrong had “sneaked into the back barn door, and then sneaked out again,” as soon as he saw her; adding:

“He was there for no good.”

Before night he was notified that his services were no longer desired, and that he must vacate the house by the spring, at the expiration of the year for which it had been leased to him. He asked no questions, and no reasons were given for his dismissal. That a new order of things had been inaugurated, he knew from the fact that Ann was keeping watch and ward over the barn, and judged it best to beat a hasty retreat before any investigation was made.

“Do you suppose Mrs. Turner would like to live there?” asked Tamson Brenner, when told by Ann that the windows were wide open and the key left in the door.

“She’d think she was near Heaven to live in such a grand place, but she never could pay the rent except in work,” was replied. “She and Dolf could do almost everything for us; and there’ll be plenty of work to be done, with the strawberries and other berries, and the currants and plums and pears. We must save every one, and I’ll find a way to sell them all. Dolf and I will just take them ’round in baskets.

“Oh, Miss Tamson, I’ll be so happy this year, I can’t tell. I’m sure we’ll do what we plan. I’ll have two hens on eggs in the hen-house to-night, and two more to-morrow. We’ll have fine chickens in season for the hotel.”

Later this was repeated to Mrs. Brenner, who asked various questions; and while smiling at the enthusiasm pervading the household, said she must really find some way to aid in the good work.

Her husband regarded her with fond admiration; her daughter petted and encouraged her, telling her there would be some dainty work, which no one else could do so well as she.

When Cousin Prudence came down from Eagle Point to lend the promised assistance, she found everything so well planned that she had only to assent to what others had proposed.

"The credit is all yours," said Tamson, in reply to some praise bestowed upon herself. "I never should have thought it possible even to plan so much, if you and Cousin Jacob had not suggested it. If I was a man, I think I could go on and pay the mortgage. I believe I can see how it might be done."

CHAPTER V.

NEW TENANTS.

MRS. TURNER and Dolf—who, if he ever had any claim to a more extended name had long since forgotten it—moved into the cottage by the spring; too much surprised at their good fortune to express half the gratitude they felt.

They were to pay the rent in work; and before a week had passed Dolf proved himself fully capable of doing all that would be required of him, while his mother was ready to give assistance wherever it was desired.

Jacob Hill came down from Eagle Point, when his cousin made a full statement of all indebtedness and embarrassments, adding:

“If I had time, I really believe I could clear up the whole thing, old as I am. My failure in business was so unexpected that it quite paralyzed me; but Tamson’s bravery makes me ashamed to remain idle and leave the work for her. You see, Jacob, I am seventy years old, and I always counted on having enough at that age to live on the income of my property.”

"The Lord had other plans for you, Luke, and you must make up your mind for ten years more of work. The work will do you good too. I don't know exactly how your place is to be taken out of Stafford's hands, but I believe it will be done. I only wish I was as sure of getting the town out of his clutches. I suppose he must have his run, and may the Lord forgive me, if it is wrong to wish that he may lose every dollar he invests here. The prospect is that we shall have an early spring, so his workmen will soon be here."

"Where are they all to be fed and lodged?"

"Somewhere in the village, I suppose. Stafford is to build a row of houses on South Street for the men who are to work in his brewery. Then he plans to build a large block for stores and groggeries. I added the groggeries, but you may be sure there will be at least one saloon."

"I presume he calculates on having this place for his home."

"I presume he does, Luke, but I think he will find himself greatly mistaken. He is not the only man who can make a change in his prospects during the year. Some who favored his coming are sorry for it already, and it wouldn't be strange if, when we have our next town meeting, there should be some stringent meas-

ures urged to prevent the sale of liquor among us."

"We shall have a good many new voters among us by that time, Jacob."

"I know it; and if they work for Stafford they will be pretty sure to vote for his interest; but I hope our own townspeople will vote against him."

"You may trust him for knowing how to increase the number of votes necessary for the protection of his business. The liquor league counts all its members brothers, and if one gives the signal of distress, there is a rush to his assistance. It is an object to establish the nefarious business in new places, and, once established, it is likely to remain."

"If I was ready to make money, regardless of every other consideration, I would go into the liquor business. It always yields a large return for the investment, and the profits can be indefinitely increased by processes every liquor-dealer understands. Of course I would starve rather than sell liquor; but in the present rush for wealth, it does not seem strange to me that many men, without either religious or moral principle, should engage in the business."

"What do you think of a man who professes to be a Christian, and still claims that there is no wrong in the use of liquor?"

“Well, Cousin Jacob, it is not for me to say that man is not a Christian, but I will say that either his judgment is warped by self-interest, or his knowledge of what constitutes a Christian’s duty is very limited.

“I knew a man in the city, a member of our church, who always spoke of a drunkard as deserving the utmost scorn, because so deficient in self-control; and yet, whenever the subject of temperance was under discussion, he insisted that the moderate use of alcoholic stimulants is often conducive to both health and happiness.”

“I suppose he was a moderate drinker himself.”

“A very moderate drinker. So moderate that he seldom drinks so much as a glass of wine. But he was interested in three large Western distilleries. He furnished capital, while others did the work and were responsible to the public.”

“Was this known to the church, and is he still allowed to retain his standing?”

“It was not known for several years, and might never have been known if we had not changed pastors. Our new pastor was a thoroughgoing, outspoken temperance man; and as he was going the rounds of the parish he found that one man in his congregation was a liquor-seller. The man was not a member of the

church, but Mr. Wain took the liberty to remonstrate with him; when he retorted by saying he thought it no worse to sell liquor than to manufacture it; in which Mr. Wain agreed with him.

"Then came his time to denounce a church member who was a distiller; and, of course, Mr. Wain agreed with him in that. The result was, that the distiller received a visit from his pastor, and was obliged to listen to some very plain statements, which so offended him that he wished to enter into other church relations. There were several meetings to consider his case, and after much discussion in regard to it, a letter of recommendation was denied him. This made little difference, however, as he was received to the church of his choice without a letter, and where he is in no danger of being censured."

"You would not consider him a Christian, Luke?"

"Perhaps I ought not to say it is impossible that he should be a Christian; but if all professing Christians were like him there would be no hope for our nation."

"Has he children?"

"He has two sons and one daughter."

"Then he is sure of his punishment, unless they have been better taught than he would teach them."

"They were beautiful children. His daughter is of nearly the same age as Tamson, and the boys are older. It is too soon to judge what the daughter's life will be, but the sons belong to the fastest set in the college where they are. It is said they have always drank liquor since they were fifteen years old, and now nothing but the grace of God will save them.

"Their father has never denied them anything it was in his power to grant; and as his wealth is counted by millions, there is no lack of money. At one time our families were intimate, but when I refused to endorse him as an exemplary Christian, the intercourse between us ceased."

"Such men are poor friends. They distrust themselves, and so need to be told they are good in order to keep their courage up. In the bottom of that man's heart, he knows he has no right to be called a Christian.

"Time was when even a deacon might own and run a distillery, and perhaps not know he was doing the devil's work; but that time has gone by. Now, these breweries have started up with this cursed German stuff, all in the interest of temperance, as some say, and we are going to have a chance to prove if what they say is true. If we don't have more drunkards in this town, ten years from now, than we ever

had before, I'll own that I've lost some of my powers of calculation. Armstrong is going to work for Stafford, and I am glad he has left your premises. I never had any faith in his honesty. He is just the one to go into a brewery."

"I think he is, and I have better tenants in his place. Dolf Turner is a bright, intelligent boy, ready for any kind of work."

His father was a bright man; quick and handy about everything he undertook to do. But there was bad blood behind him, and when he began drinking an occasional glass of beer it was all up with him. Before long he took something stronger than beer, and actually drank himself to death in three years.

"He didn't begin to drink at all until after Dolf was born; so it may be the boy will escape the curse. Mrs. Turner has done and said everything she could to impress him with a hatred for liquor. Mrs. Byam told me about it, and she says Dolf would be killed before he would break his pledge.

"Mrs. Turner beggared herself to take care of her husband and pay the expenses of his sickness and burial. She ruined her health so that she could do but little work for a long time. She sold every article of furniture she could possibly spare that would bring her in a

dollar, and I am afraid she has sometimes been both cold and hungry."

"She will be neither cold nor hungry while she lives near me."

"Dolf is old enough now to provide against that. He is a strong, healthy boy, and I believe he can be trusted. But he will have to stand trial. There will be no stone unturned to make beer-drinkers of our boys, and there will be a strong rowdy element in our village before summer is out."

"It shall not intrude upon my premises or my tenants, so long as I retain possession of this place. I don't know why it is, but sometimes I have faith to believe that I shall be allowed to spend the remainder of my life here.

"I think I have friends who would help me if I only had courage to apply to them; but so long as I was utterly hopeless, I could think only of the misery I had brought upon my family."

"Stop brooding over that, Cousin Luke. The misery—as you call it—may turn out to be something entirely different. Think of what may be done with the old farm, and what you can do to counteract the evil influences that are coming in upon us like a flood.

"Don't shut yourself up away from your neighbors. Go to church, and help sustain the

prayer-meetings. You can do that, Luke; and you owe it to yourself as a Christian to show more fortitude and courage. You have not been through what I have."

"True, Jacob, I have not; I would have given all I possessed to save the life of my boy. Money seemed to me then of little value, yet the loss of it quite unmanned me. I kept saying to myself, 'If I was twenty years younger I might begin over again'; but I thought I was too old for any new enterprise."

"Farming will not be a new enterprise. You knew something about it when you were a boy; and, besides, the most you have to do is to take what is already furnished to your hand.

"I don't want to find fault with you, Luke, but it seems to me cowardly to sit down and do nothing because you are no longer young. Some men have done their best work in the world after they were of your age. The experience you have had ought to count for a great deal."

CHAPTER VI.

THE MORTGAGE.

"WELL, now, this is what I call a regular waking up of the old town," remarked one farmer to another, as they met in the village street. "Spring is early this year, and everybody seems ready to improve it. Things are lively. Work for all, and good wages, paid every Saturday night.

"Couldn't make the croakers believe Stafford's coming would help us any, but there's more money stirring than there ever was 'round here before, and he's only just begun. I tell you, when he gets his brewery started, things will look different 'round here from what they have the last twenty years.

"We needed stirring up. Summer boarders helped us, but they don't stay long enough. Stafford has come to stay. You voted for the brewery, didn't you?" continued the speaker, as he began to realize his companion's silence.

"I did, and I am ashamed of it already," was replied. "I looked on only one side of the question, and forgot there might be another."

"I heard your wife was opposed to it."

"She is, and so are my daughters. They were opposed to it from the beginning. More shame to me, that I was influenced by outsiders rather than by my own family. I thought I saw a way to clear off the mortgage from my farm, and that made me blind to everything else."

"You are going to sow barley on the land you broke up last fall, ain't you?"

"I don't think I shall. I calculated to, but I've had some new light on the subject, and I hope for a good crop of oats."

"You'd get more money for barley."

"There is something in the world of more value than money. I did wrong when I voted for the brewery; now I am going to do all I can to show my repentance."

"Well, I don't suppose I can say anything to change your mind. I knew how your girls felt about it; but I believe in men managing their own business; and as long as I'm 'round, I calculate to manage mine. Your girls talk to my boys every chance they can get; and they seem to think Stafford is going to ruin the town unless everybody goes to work to prevent it."

"I have made up my mind to that; and the more I think of it the more I believe it."

"I don't see any ruin about it. I think Stafford is a whole-souled, generous fellow. He looks out for number one, of course; but he says

he wants to help other folks while he is helping himself."

"And you believe him?"

"Why, yes; I am bound to believe what a man says till I catch him in a lie."

"You can't think he is trying to help Luke Brenner."

"Well, I did think that looked rather hard; but after all, he paid out his money, and I suppose he has a right to get it back. I don't know as there's any reason why Luke Brenner shouldn't be expected to pay his debts the same as the rest of us. He has held his head pretty high, and his lady wife hasn't wanted anything to do with common folks. It must be a good deal of a come-down for them to find themselves no better off than their neighbors. As for Tamson, she is handsome enough."

"And as good as she is handsome. Herbert was a fine boy."

"Yes, he was; I never'll go back on that. You know he saved my Bennie's life. My boy would have drowned if it hadn't been for him; and when he died we felt as though we had lost a friend. If he had lived his father wouldn't broke down as he has. Herbert would have found some way to put things in better shape than they are. To my mind, he was an uncommonly smart boy."

"To my mind, Tamson is an uncommonly smart girl. There has been a change in the order of things on the Brenner place, and Tamson is the moving spirit. It would be a shame for that place to go on the mortgage. There's enough on it that can be spared as well as not to clear it, and I shouldn't be surprised, any day, to know that Stafford had been paid every dollar his due, principal and interest. I, for one, don't want to see the Brenner place go out of the family."

"Nor I, either; but we can't expect Stafford to feel about it as we do. It is a matter of business with him. Friendship has nothing to do with it."

"There is more spite than friendship; poor spite too. Because he fancied Tamson Brenner, and she didn't fancy him, he probably thought he would punish her for not accepting him as her husband."

"I heard something about that. Men don't like to get the mitten, and I suppose Stafford thought his good looks and his prospect for getting rich ought to make him sure of most any girl. It wouldn't be strange if Tamson Brenner never gets a chance to do any better."

"She is taking a better chance. Money made in the way Clyde Stafford proposes to make it will bring a curse with it. To think we should

have a brewery here in our midst, and I consenting to it! I wish I had the means to clear Luke Brenner's place. I'd take it out of Stafford's hands before to-morrow morning."

"If Tamson would marry Stafford, it would be all right about the place, anyway. It may not be too late for her to save it now."

"She is doing her part towards it. She and the hired-girl are busy from morning till night with all kinds of work that will bring in a cent. They say, too, that Luke Brenner is going over his farm this spring dressed no better than the rest of us."

"That is the best thing I ever heard of him. It won't hurt him to go to work."

Jacob Hill had made the same remark, although in a very different tone. He knew that work was just what the man needed to give him both mental and physical strength. Brooding over trouble never lightens it; but when once the thoughts and hands are occupied with immediate necessities, a way of escape seems open.

Luke Brenner proved the truth of this, as day after day he found himself growing more hopeful. His wife, too, seemed almost transformed, refusing longer to be considered an invalid. She went with her husband in his walks through the garden and orchard, often giving him assistance in pruning or training some

straggling vine, and always so bright and cheerful, that it was impossible for him to be despondent.

She was interested in his plans. She made important suggestions which commended themselves to his judgment, but of which he had never thought. She was wholly absorbed in the family fortunes; not for herself alone, but for those dear to her.

"Clyde Stafford shall never have this place," she said one day, looking off to the mountains, which kept watch and ward, like sentinels, over the pleasant country town. "I used to think it was lonely and dreary here, but it is the dearest place in the world to me now. I could not bear to leave it."

"You shall not leave it," replied her husband, raising her hand to his lips with old-time gallantry.

Tamson Brenner was jubilant over the change in her mother, who counted the crocks of butter already stored for a future market; computing their price and the amount which could be spared toward reducing the debt. The baskets of fresh-laid eggs were her especial care; consigned each week to Jacob Hill, who brought her the proceeds of their sale.

The warm, sunny days of an early spring had developed the blossoms of the linden trees, so

that the bees came laden to their hives, which soon became so crowded that a part of the occupants sought other quarters, which were quickly provided. There was promise of abundance of fruit, to be gathered in its season; one variety succeeding another, until the frosts of autumn should seal the harvest.

"Nothing will be allowed to go to waste on the Brenner place this year," remarked Mrs. Hill, after spending a day with her cousins. "Luke's wife will make the most of everything in the way of dress, and have it all look nice, too. We got to talking, and I told her about my black silk that has been out of fashion these ten years. She wants I should carry it down and let her see it. She said she knew she could make a good dress of it."

"You and Luke's wife must have got better acquainted than you ever were before, or you never would have told about that black silk. As folks say, you and she never took to each other."

"I know it; but I shouldn't wonder now if we get to be very good friends. She has a kind heart, but she says she has always been selfish with her husband, 'though she loves him as well as any woman ought to love a husband.

"Tamson says her mother is doing everything now to make her father look on the bright side

of things; and they are all so busy they don't have time to worry. Luke and his wife seem almost like children together, and I never saw him when he appeared as happy as he does now. Tamson watches them, and is so happy herself, she don't know when she is tired. As for Ann, she wishes the days were longer, so she could do more work.

"Ann is a treasure, and the way she and Dolf Turner are running the barn and hen-house, is enough to astonish everybody who knows about it. At the rate things are managed there now, the farm will pay a good income this year. Luke says if they can meet their expenses the first six months, he shall have a face to ask assistance from some of his friends."

"They will more than meet their expenses, wife. Tamson told me they were living almost entirely on home products, and she saves something from every dollar that is brought into the house. She talked with her father and he agreed to it.

"They will have bushels of strawberries, and what are not sold they will can, so there will be no loss. The bees must be doing well. The last time I was down there the linden trees were fairly humming. It sounded like old times, and Luke said the bees were swarming

wonderfully. He can sell every pound of honey for a good price.

"It is my opinion that Armstrong knows a great deal more about what the bees have been doing the last few years than Luke does. Armstrong sold more honey than he ever had a right to. Now he can steal from Stafford; and as far as Stafford is concerned, I am willing he should."

"I always pitied Mrs. Armstrong. She looks like a heart-broken woman; and any one who saw her with her husband would know she was afraid of him."

"That is enough to know of any man. When a woman is afraid of her husband, you may be sure he is not fit to be trusted by anybody."

"I believe you are right there, Jacob. But to come back to Cousin Luke. Have you any idea where he could get money to pay up the mortgage and clear himself from Stafford?"

"I have several ideas, Prudence; but as I am not sure of anything, I would rather not commit myself even to you. But I have no doubt that before the year is out, the mortgage will be paid."

CHAPTER VII.

THAD BYAM.

MRS. BYAM had calculated that her grandson would remain in bed at least until she had milked her cow and prepared breakfast; but he was up before her, and brought the milk into the pantry, just as he had done when he was a boy.

"I am afraid you didn't sleep well," she said, after he had kissed her "good-morning."

"I slept like a top," he answered; adding: "I never could forget your night and morning kiss. That, and some other things, have kept me from going to the bad."

"I am glad of it. I began that way when you were a little fellow, and you never seemed to think you had outgrown it," was replied; while the happiness the speaker could not half express quite illumined her face. "You thought you couldn't sleep without grandma's kiss."

"I remember all about it; and I remember, too, that it was hard work to get the kiss when I had been naughtier than usual. I have given you lots of trouble, grandmother, but now I am going to try and make up to you for part of it."

"There is nothing to make up for, Thad. You had a boy's ways, and likely I didn't always do the best thing by you, 'though I tried to. I hope now we are both of us all right, and I can't begin to tell you how thankful I am for somebody to care for me in my old age. I don't know how I could borne to have you go wrong."

"I came near it, grandmother—nearer than you know; but a new influence came to me and held me back."

"We'll talk about that when we have more time: when you can tell me all about it."

"That will be best, for we may have a good deal to say. When I was milking I wondered if I could catch some trout for breakfast. Do you suppose anybody has found my pool under the rock by the big elm?"

"I don't know; I have never heard anything about it, 'though the city folks that come here in summer have fished up and down the brook, till I shouldn't think they had missed a foot of it."

"I guess I'll try my luck. There ought to be some pretty big fish under the rock, and there won't be anybody out at this time of day to see where I go."

Fishing-tackle was where it had been left two years before, while plenty of bait was

quickly found. The fish were just waiting to be caught, as Thad told his grandmother when he displayed the result of his angling.

No one sat down that morning to a more appetizing breakfast than did these two. The table was covered with a snowy cloth of home-made linen, and the "best dishes" had been brought from the little buffet in the corner of the "front room." There was real country cream in the cream-jug, while upon a rare old platter were the mountain trout, fried crisp and brown, and garnished with watercress, gathered by the tiny rivulet which helped to swell the larger brook.

"It is worth five years of hard work just to come back and find everything so good," said the young man, after listening reverently to the short prayer offered by his grandmother.

"I was afraid the old house would seem so small you wouldn't be willing to stay in it; and I didn't know as you could sleep in the little room under the eaves; 'though since I had the windows thrown out it is larger than it used to be," was replied.

"It is a delightful room, grandmother; a great deal better than the one I have slept in the last two years. When a poor fellow goes to experimenting with inventions, he has to come right down to hard-pan in the way of liv-

ing. I worked days to earn money to spend nights. I hired a garret and bought a stove, a table, two chairs, and what answered for a bed; and you may be sure I didn't spend any more for what I ate than was absolutely necessary. Sometimes I forgot about my supper, so I didn't have any."

"Why, Thaddeus, I should have worried about you if I had known you was living like that. And all the time you were sending me money you needed for yourself."

"It was nothing to worry about, grandmother. I didn't go hungry; or, if I did, I didn't know it. I always had one good, square meal in the week. That was Sunday morning, when I bought beans and brown bread, and had coffee with milk and sugar in it."

"I hope you didn't work Sundays?"

"No, grandmother, I didn't do that. There was a good deal of the time when I didn't have clothes fit to wear to meeting in daylight, but I didn't work. I used to manage to get 'round where there was preaching and praying in the evening, and that helped me."

"Did you earn all the money you have spent?"

"Every dollar, till it came to the last pull. Then I borrowed a thousand dollars to finish up with, and gave security on my invention. The money is to be paid back in two years, or

the man who lent it to me will get all the benefit of my work."

"Can you pay it?"

"I have no doubt that I can. The money will be ready for him in less than a year. I am going slow and sure. I don't expect to get rich the first thing, but I shall have enough to pay my debt and keep things moving."

"When did you first begin to think about your invention, as you call it?"

"I have thought of it so long I hardly know when I begun, but I never should have done it if it hadn't been for Mr. Brenner. He always used to speak to me when he saw me, and generally stop and ask me how I was getting along. Once when there was a chance for us to talk together a few minutes, I told him what I had been thinking about, and he encouraged me to try and see what I could do.

"Next to you, Mr. Brenner has been the best friend I ever had, and I never was so sorry for anybody as I was for him when he failed. If I had had money to give him he shouldn't have thrown up his business. It was such a pity for him to sacrifice so much."

"It will be more of a pity if he loses the old place, and they say there is danger of it."

"I heard something about that, grandmother, and I wish you would tell me just how it is."

So far as Mrs. Byam knew, the story was told; with many an interruption on the part of the listener, who asked a succession of questions, many of which she was unable to answer.

"Grandmother, I might have been a drunkard if Mr. Brenner had not given me some good advice one evening, after he had seen me in company with some boys who had started on the wrong track, and who thought it the very height of manliness to smoke and drink liquor," said Thaddeus Byam. "I was coming home the nearest way, through the lindens, and Mr. Brenner was there.

"He didn't talk hard to me, but he made me feel that there was something better for me than wasting time and money on tobacco and liquor. He stirred all the good there was in me, and if I live I will make him some return for it.

"The man who lent me money is a friend of Mr. Brenner's, and if I can't do anything myself I can appeal to him. My invention can stand another mortgage, and I can work it out. I know I can."

"If you only could, Thad, I should be so thankful; and a good many others would be thankful, too."

"I can do it; I know I can. I wish I was as sure of upsetting that brewery arrangement. What were the men thinking of to vote that curse into the town?"

“Thinking of a market for their barley, and the money that will be stirring.”

“Money will be stirring. There is no doubt of that; but in the end it will stir back into Stafford’s pocket. Brewers and distillers are making enormous profits, and these profits are largely paid by men whose families are often half starved.”

“They say Stafford calls his beer a good temperance drink; good for keeping folks well, and curing them when they are sick.”

“He knows that is not true. Beer is the curse of the mechanics in our cities. I have worked with young men who spent so much for beer and tobacco they had hardly enough left from their wages to pay for board and clothing. A company of them would get together in what they call a beer-garden, and drink glass after glass of beer through the whole evening.”

“Did you ever go with them?” asked Mrs. Byam, looking at her grandson sharply.

“I went once to a beer-garden, but I did not drink a drop of beer. I wanted to see what was done there; and as there was a policeman at the door, I was pretty sure no one could force me to drink. I had to stand a good deal of chaffing and some threatening, but I turned it off as well as I could, and managed to keep them all good-natured.”

“Do you know how the beer tastes?”

“Yes; I drank one glass that was ordered by a physician. I wasn't feeling very well, and he advised me to take a glass every day with my dinner, but one was enough for me. It was disagreeable to me, but I presume I could have learned to like it, and perhaps crave it, as so many others do.”

“What would have happened then, Thad? I can't bear to think of it.”

“There is no need that you should think of it, grandmother. I think of it only to be thankful that I am a teetotaler. I have kept some of my shopmates from drinking beer, and so saved them. One poor fellow who needed every cent he earned to keep a home for his invalid mother was in great danger, because there was another workman determined to get him in with the beer-drinkers, and it was hard for him to say no.

“One evening, when I knew there was to be a grand push for him, I invited him to my garret and gave him a little treat. It cost me something, but it saved the boy. Before he went home I got him to sign my pledge; and after that all the world couldn't make him break it.”

“What is his name?”

“Rothwell Skies, but everybody shortens the first name to Roth. He is a bright, active fel-

low, just doing his level best; and when I start out for myself I shall take him with me."

"Does his mother know what you have done for him?"

"Yes, and repaid me for it. She has invited me to tea with her and Roth every Sunday for the last year. I always take something along with me, so as not to make them any expense, and they live in close quarters, but it is a great deal to me to sit down at the table with them, after eating alone all through the week. Then, after tea, we have a nice talk together, and that is best of all. Mrs. Skies is a good woman, who has seen lots of trouble."

"There are a great many such women in the world."

"I begin to think so; and the wonder to me is that they are so patient and cheerful. I wonder how you ever had patience with me, and I may try your patience again; for now I am home, I feel very much like the boy who tracked your clean floor, and whistled when he ought to have kept still."

CHAPTER VIII.

CLYDE STAFFORD, THE BREWER.

WHISTLING down the street, keeping step to his own music. Ten years before he had been only Widow Byam's grandson; bright and smart, as everybody said, yet as likely to go wrong as right. He could do "a big day's work," but he wished for a different kind of work every day.

Old people talked wisely of the rolling stone which gathers no moss; although there were some who, knowing his kind heart, were always ready to speak a good word for him.

Now he was "a really promising young man"; the inventor of machinery which would revolutionize an important industry. In arranging to bring this invention before the public he had shown a business ability which was the more remarkable because of his inexperience.

His fortune was already assured. His townsmen were proud that one of their number should have achieved such success; a little curious, too, to know how he would carry his new honors.

There he was, whistling down the street,

stopping occasionally to speak to some old acquaintance, and then resuming his walk, until he stood before a saloon which had been recently opened. Just then two young men came out of the saloon, of whom he asked the question:

"Is it for eating, or drinking?"

"For both, 'though there's more drinking than eating," was replied. "If you want a glass of good beer, there's the place to get it."

"Good beer," repeated Thad Byam contemptuously. "There is no such thing as good beer. It is all bad."

"That is your opinion."

"It is; and I am ready to back it up."

"Maybe you are, but when the new brewery gets to running, you better not tell Stafford his beer is bad."

"He will know it without being told, and you will all find it out before you die."

Some men at work not far away heard this colloquy, and as they turned to see the speakers, one of them exclaimed:

"Thad Byam, as I live."

"You are right about that, Tim," was the quick response. "We have both of us changed, but there is enough of the old stock left to show where we came from. No matter about that, though. The question nowadays is, 'Where

are you going?' Shake hands, and tell me how you have prospered."

"My hands are not fit to touch yours. I have been working in the dirt, and the dirt sticks."

"I'm used to dirt that sticks, and there is no reason to be ashamed of good, honest dirt. Where are Dick and Luf? You three were generally pretty near together when you were younger."

"They ain't a great ways off. We scattered 'round for a while, but this spring we thought we could do as well here as anywhere. We ain't of the kind to get rich in a minute, as you have. No such luck for us."

"I am not rich; and as for luck, I have had the luck to work hard, and fare hard too sometimes."

"But we heard up here——"

"You didn't hear how I lived in a garret and cooked my own food, did you?" said Thaddeus Byam, interrupting the story of what had been heard.

"I didn't suppose you did that," was replied hesitatingly.

"I did, and thought myself lucky when I could afford a pint of milk to wash down my supper of dry bread. When you come to that, you will know something about such luck as I have had."

While the speaker was thus giving his old-time acquaintance a glimpse of his life, he was scanning closely the face before him, upon which dissipation and ungoverned passions had already left their marks.

The three, usually found together, were the three against whose influence Mr. Brenner had warned Widow Byam's grandson, and who had ever afterward regarded him with positive dislike.

"We heard you were getting rich, and we've been looking for you to come back in grand style," remarked Tim, with a sorry attempt to be facetious. "Didn't know but you'd stop at the hotel with the rest of the big-bugs. Didn't know as the little brown house would be large enough for you."

"The little brown house will be large enough for me as long as my grandmother lives. I wouldn't miss this vacation on the old place for half a year's work. But say, Tim, how has the world used you, or you used the world, since I saw you last?"

"Bad enough. Poor folks can't expect much of the world. It's a grind from beginning to end. Couldn't stand it anyway if I didn't stop once in a while and have a let-up, 'though I have to make up for it afterwards. How long are you going to stay 'round here?"

"One month. I should like to stay all summer, but I can't afford it."

"Come into the saloon and have a glass of beer with me for old times' sake; or have you got above beer?"

"Thank you, Tim, but I never drink beer. I am a teetotal temperance man."

"But this is real temperance beer; such as Stafford is going to make when he gets his brewery started. He says he shall be doing more for temperance than any other man in town."

"He knows that he lies every time he says that. Every man who drinks beer is in a fair way to be a drunkard, and every brewer knows it. Drinking beer is a waste of time and money. While the drinker gets poorer the brewer gets richer, and every brewer knows it."

"Didn't suppose you'd be down on beer at that rate. It ain't the way folks look at it 'round here. They thought it would be a good thing for the town to have Stafford come here and start up business."

"You don't mean that the voters of this town thought it would be a good thing to have a brewery here?"

"Well—no—not all of them. There were some that opposed it; but they can't help seeing that there's more money coming into town."

"They can't help seeing that in the end most of the money will go into one pocket. Mark my words, Tim, the brewery will be a curse to the town. It is a curse already."

"You wouldn't want to say that to Stafford; nor the farmers either, who are raising big crops of barley he'll pay them a good price for."

"I have no quarrel with Stafford or the farmers, but if occasion required, I should express my mind as plainly to them as I have to you."

"It wouldn't have any effect if you did," said Tim sharply. "The brewery is going up in spite of you and old Brenner. He has got to come down on a level with the rest of us, and I am glad of it. His lady wife may have to wear something besides silks and satins."

"They say Tamson Brenner thought she was too good to marry Stafford, but she may see the day when she'll be glad of such a home as he would give her. He holds the mortgage on the old place, and has foreclosed too, without a chance of its being redeemed, unless somebody outside of the family comes forward with the money. There ain't much likelihood of that, since so many lost by the old man's failure."

"Nobody lost by Mr. Brenner's failure except himself and his family. He was honest and honorable to the last degree. He might

have kept something for his wife and daughter, but he didn't do it."

"Well, I don't know about that, 'though folks say he'd do 'most anything for them. Some folks think Tamson is handsome, and they say she is smart too. I suppose you are well acquainted with her."

"I never spoke to her but once in my life, and that was when she was a little girl. I thought then she was wonderfully pretty, but we have all changed since then; you and I, as well as the rest. Remember me to Dick and Luf. I hope I shall see them while I am at home, and see you again too."

"You'll find me 'round here for the next six months. I've got a steady job, and I'm going to stick to it. Don't suppose you'd take a cigar, any more than you would a glass of beer?"

"No, I wouldn't. I smoked my first and last cigar with you, and I never wanted another. There's altogether too much money spent for liquor and tobacco in this country. I've seen men waste money that way, and leave their wives and children hungry."

"Well, I hain't got any wife, and it's nobody's business how I spend my money. I earn it and spend it, and that's the end of it, and——"

Thaddeus Byam walked away, leaving his

whilom companion to complete the declaration of independence, which had in it more of bravado than actual feeling.

"Just as I expected," soliloquized the young man who found himself alone. "Can't come anywhere near him, he's so awful good. Wish we could catch him napping, but it's no use trying. He's too wide awake for that. I shall have something to tell Dick and Luf. Wonder if all three of us could talk him down on the beer question. What good would it do if we could? He's at the top and we're at the bottom. I never come so close in the way of living as he told about, but he's got through with that. Luck is all on his side."

Meanwhile Thaddeus Byam had met others who gave him hearty congratulations upon his success. Afterward, he recalled the fact that nearly every one who addressed him spoke of the brewery and the foreclosure of the Brenner mortgage.

"Seems as though Stafford was bound to put down everybody that opposes him," said an old man who didn't believe in new-fangled drinks that "cost so much money and never satisfied anybody."

Thaddeus Byam had seen and heard enough to make him more thankful than ever before for the word spoken in season which had so influ-

enced his life. Almost involuntarily he took the path leading through the lindens to his home, and there he met Mr. Brenner, who greeted him with the utmost cordiality. There was the rustic bench on which the two had sat while the man clasped the boy's hands fast in his own and told of the possibilities waiting for every true, earnest worker.

"The bench has grown old, and its days of usefulness are over, but it has served its purpose for many a year," said he who had placed the bench in its present position.

"It only needs new props to make it serviceable for many a year to come," was replied. "The bench itself is all right. The trouble is with the props, and with your permission I will make them all right while I am at home. I have thought of this grove many a time when I was almost panting for breath in my close garret."

"I am afraid your close garret witnessed some dark days."

"Not so dark but there was light ahead. I was always looking forward to something better, and as long as a man can do that, he has courage to work."

"That is true. It is when a man has lost hope that he becomes disheartened and discouraged; feeling that there is nothing more left for him."

"Mr. Brenner, you are far wiser than I am, but it seems to me no man ought to feel like that as long as he is in this world; and when it comes to another, there is the infinite blessedness; is there not? I think discouraged people are something like this bench. They are all right if they can only be propped up.

"The plank here is firm and strong; the shade as dense as ever, and the prospect as beautiful. The trouble is that the props are a little shaky. When you come here again I think you will find the bench as serviceable as ever."

"The boy has taught me a lesson I shall not soon forget," said Mr. Brenner half aloud, after bidding Thaddeus Byam "Good-morning."

CHAPTER IX.

EATING-SALOON.

"I THINK I will go up to Eagle Point to-day," said Thaddeus Byam to his grandmother, as they sat at breakfast. "I want to see Mr. and Mrs. Hill. Next to Mr. Brenner, they were the best friends I had when I was a boy. I suppose it would be too much for you to walk up there with me."

"I walked up there when snow was on the ground. The snow was frozen hard, so it was like walking on a floor; but if I take my time for it I think I can go through the woods without getting too tired. I want to go too. I want to know how things are going at the Brenner place, and Prudence and Jacob can tell me all about it."

"That is what I want to know. I came through the Brenner woods yesterday, and I never knew before how much fine timber there is on the place. There are some splendid oaks that would sell for a big price."

"Talk with Jacob about it."

"I will; and we may as well start for Eagle Point as soon as we can."

Mrs. Byam was as eager to be on the way as was her grandson, so that it was early when they reached their destination.

"We were talking about you not an hour ago, and wishing you would come," said Mrs. Hill, extending a hand to each of her visitors. "Jacob said he wanted to hear Thaddeus tell his own story. You know he was always interested in you," she added, looking at the young man standing before her, who replied:

"He was interested in Thad Byam. I am pretty sure that he never called me Thaddeus in all my life, and I don't want him to begin now. I am just Thad, as I used to be; only with a few years *over* my head, and, I hope, a little more sense *in* it. I came home to be a boy again."

"All right, Thad," answered Mrs. Hill, and thus all formality was at an end.

The day was long, but not too long for all that was to be said, and the plans that were to be considered.

"People say Stafford hadn't a doubt but what the Brenner place would come into his hands," remarked Jacob Hill, as they were talking of the mortgage held by the brewer.

"Cousin Luke was so discouraged he didn't

think of trying to pay the debt. But everything has changed ; and now, if anybody would advance the money, it could be repaid in less than five years. I am sure of that. Of course, Stafford would never consent to a transfer of the mortgage. Nothing less than money in hand would compel him to give up his claim. He wants to see Tamson living in poverty ; but I have too much faith in God's justice to believe that will ever be."

"It never shall be, Mr. Hill. I don't know the amount of the mortgage, but there is timber enough in the Brenner woods to pay a heavy debt."

"That is true, Thad, but it cannot be touched so long as Stafford holds the mortgage. Once get the place out of his clutches, and it could soon be cleared of all incumbrance. Things are working well, and it won't hurt Cousin Luke to feel that a good deal is depending upon him ; 'though, to tell the truth, Tamson and Ann and Dolf Turner are at the forefront of the management. Cousin Luke's wife, too, is ready to do her part, and is as busy as any of them."

"So grandmother told me. I remember Mrs. Brenner when I was a boy. I thought it almost presumption for me even to look at her, she seemed so far above me."

"She is only a mortal woman, Thad."

"I know that, but she was rich and stylish, and I was only a poor, barefooted boy."

"A pretty wide awake boy."

"Yes, sir; I think I was all that, and altogether too full of mischief for my grandmother's comfort. I must have been a trial to her."

"I don't know about that. You kept things a good deal stirred up some of the time, but she was happier than she would have been alone. We all need to feel that our lives are of consequence to somebody besides ourselves."

"I believe that, Mr. Hill. The thought of grandmother in her little cottage praying for me, as I knew she did, gave me courage to persevere in what has at last proved a success. I felt that she depended upon me, and I would not disappoint her. Now, in some way, I must help Mr. Brenner. I never can repay him for his kindness, but I can at least prove my gratitude."

"I could realize on my invention at once by selling it outright, but that would be the same as allowing another to reap the largest part of the harvest where I had sowed the seed. I chose to retain it in my own hands and wait for results. If anything could tempt me to accept an offer I have received, it would be that I might advance the money for Mr. Brenner."

“Don’t do that, Thad. I think we can manage it. They have eight months longer to live on the place, anyway, and they will learn a great deal in that time. Cousin Luke’s wife is just finding out there is something for her to do in the world besides looking pretty and being waited on. I don’t know as I ought to say that, but she said it herself the last time I saw her. Cousin Luke has taken a new lease of life, and as for Tamson, she is busy as a bee all day long.”

“I thought when I came through the lindens that the bees were pretty busy.”

“They are, and that means a good deal of honey to be sold. Then there are the small fruits. The bushes are simply loaded.”

“He told me his strawberries are beginning to ripen.”

“They are, and they will sell for a good price as fast as they are ready for market. He will have an immense crop. Then there will be apples, pears, and plums. If well managed—as I think it will be—the place will give a good income this year. I hear Stafford planned how he would improve it, though it is my opinion he don’t say much about it now.”

“He never shall have the Brenner place. I wish I was as sure that he never should have any of the boys around here for drunkards, but

he will if they begin drinking his beer. How could the people vote to exempt his business from taxation for ten years, when they knew he intended to build a brewery?"

"There was strong opposition to it, but he made a good many believe that his coming here would be a great benefit to the town. We never had a liquor-saloon in the town till he came here. The old tavern sold liquor, and I suppose anybody that wanted it could get it at the new hotel; but the saloon is for liquor and nothing else."

"The sign reads, 'Eating-Saloon.'"

"I know it does, and I suppose they have crackers and something of that sort to eat; but it is my opinion that drinking is the principal thing done there."

"I think you are right there, Mr. Hill. One of the patrons of the saloon told me so, and there is stronger liquor than beer sold there."

"Beer is the bait thrown out to catch the boys. Black, who sold Stafford land, has four boys, and he is half crazy for fear they will go to the saloon. His wife was opposed to his selling the land, but he never would hear to her, anyway. She says it will be a just punishment for him if his boys turn drunkards; but the punishment would be hard to bear."

"It would be no harder for them than for others."

"True, but we have no boys to spare as a sacrifice to Stafford's greed for money. It is money he is after."

"And money he will have, if he carries out his plans for building a brewery. Brewers make enormous profits on their beer. Stafford is evidently working now to create a home demand for his beer before he has any to sell."

"Have you seen him?"

"I have not. I have no desire to see him, 'though some have told me that he is handsome and agreeable."

"Some people call him handsome, and there is no doubt that he tries to make himself agreeable; but he has what I call a bad face. There is a half-hidden look that shows what the man is. When he is off his guard that look is plain to be seen. He is determined to have his own way. Anybody with half an eye can see that, and he calculates to punish anybody who opposes him."

"I presume he never thought it possible that Tamson Brenner would refuse to marry him, until the refusal came. Then he was so angry he as good as told people he had got the mitten; and every move he has made since shows that he intends to be revenged upon her. She

never would have told any one outside of her family that he asked her to marry him, and now she doesn't talk about it."

"She is a thousand times too good for him, I know that, 'though I never spoke to her but once in my life, and that was when she was a little girl."

"You have seen her since you came home?"

"I saw a young lady at church with Mr. Brenner. Rather, there were two young ladies."

"One was Ann, the house girl, as they call her now. She is a Swede, and came from the city with them. They used to think of her only as a servant; but now Tamson and she are always together, and she is developing into a splendid woman. She has managed indoors and out in a way that has made the family regard her as a dear friend. I don't know what they would have done without her."

"I think I saw her with Dolf Turner."

"I presume you did. She is training him to make himself generally useful; and he would go through fire and water to serve her or any member of the family. There is nothing wanting to save that place but a few thousand dollars to put in Clyde Stafford's hands, and in less than five years Luke Brenner will owe no man anything."

"I can manage it, Mr. Hill; I know I can."

When I get back to the city I am going to an old friend of Mr. Brenner's and tell him all about it. I am going to look out, too, for a market for some of those old oaks."

"So do, Thad. They can't be touched till the mortgage is cleared off; but as soon as that is paid there will be a chance for some fine lumbering."

In thus planning for the relief of a friend the time passed so quickly that Jacob Hill and his guest were greatly surprised when told that dinner waited for them in the pleasant kitchen. There the conversation became more general; drifting at last to Thad Byam's personal interests. In response to the questions of his friends, he told of the labors and self-denials with which his success had been purchased.

"I hope you didn't ever go really hungry?" said kind-hearted Mrs. Hill.

"I think I never did," he replied. "For one thing, I was so absorbed in my work I didn't care much for anything else. I often ate coarse bread with nothing but water for sauce, and I could take a bite of that as I worked.

"When I got so sleepy my eyes wouldn't keep open any longer, I went to bed. If it was warm weather I threw myself on the bed without undressing. That is not a good way to do, but it saved time and trouble."

"I hope you don't do that now you are at home?" said his grandmother.

"No, indeed," he responded. "I am a gentleman of leisure for this month, and can afford to make myself comfortable. I should not care to live over my garret life, but I never saw a sick day through it all.

"A young man who makes the most of his strength, letting tobacco and liquor alone, ought to be able to do a great amount of hard work without injury to himself. I am none the worse for what I have done. I am sound in wind and limb; ready for any job grandmother needs to have done."

"Thad is just like the boy he always was, only I don't worry about him now," remarked the old lady, looking upon him with pardonable pride; adding quickly: "I haven't worried about him since he signed the pledge never to taste of liquor or tobacco. I knew he wouldn't break his pledge."

CHAPTER X.

SUNSET WOODS.

To Sunset Woods to visit Richard Anslow and his sister, Miss Rebecca.

"Now that I have seen Mr. and Mrs. Hill, I must see my friends in the old stone house," said Thad Byam.

"Certainly you must," replied his grandmother. "The last time Mr. Anslow called here he asked a good many more questions about you than I could answer; and he wanted you to be sure and make them a visit when you came home.

"I won't go with you there. Some way I never could feel at home with Miss Rebecca, 'though she's a nice woman. There's something about her I don't understand. You will get along better without me."

"Perhaps so, grandmother. There is a mystery about those people, and I always wished I could know more about them, but I like them. I learned a good deal in Mr. Anslow's workshop that has been of use to me."

"He will be glad to hear that. You always seemed to get nearer to them than anybody else I know of."

"That was because they thought I had done them a great favor by telling them about the cold spring. They said they might never have found it."

"That spring has grown famous. Mr. Anslow could get a big price if he would sell it with the right of way to it through the woods, or with a few acres of land around it. A company wanted to buy it."

"Was Stafford one of the company?"

"I don't know. I only heard what I told you. But Mr. Anslow says he never will sell a foot of land as long as he lives. Are you going to walk over there?"

"Of course I am. It is a real treat to me to put my feet on the ground after tramping on pavements so long. I know the shortest way, and it will be strange if I don't see enough as I go through the woods to make me forget how far it is."

"There never was another such a boy for seeing things," said Mrs. Byam to herself, as he started off at a swinging gait.

However strange and unsocial others might think the inmates of the old stone house, Thad Byam was always sure of a warm welcome, and

doubly so now when he had so much to tell that they wished to hear. Little changed were their surroundings, except that the trees had grown larger, and there were more flowers in the little garden than he had ever seen there before.

"I thought it was about time for you to come," said Mr. Anslow after the first greetings. "I didn't suppose you had forgotten us."

"No, sir; I shall never forget you or Miss Rebecca," was responded heartily. "I should miss something from coming home if I could not come here."

"I am glad of that. Rebecca is busy in the dairy, but she will be ready to leave her work the minute she knows you are here. People say you are going to be a rich man."

"I am not sure of that, 'though I think there is a fair prospect that I may have a comfortable fortune before I am a very old man."

"I never saw you when you seemed uncomfortable. I have wished a great many times that I could feel, for a single day, as well as you seemed to."

"You must have felt something like it when you were a boy."

"Boys are not all alike; but anyway I am right glad to see you"; and then there came over the man's face the same expression at which his companion had often wondered.

At that moment Miss Rebecca came in smiling brightly. She was a tall, graceful woman, with quite the manners of a lady, impressing her visitor with the feeling that she had dropped out of the place to which she rightfully belonged.

"I shall not be the first to congratulate you upon your success, but you will receive no congratulations more sincere than mine," she said, as she held the young man's hand in her own. "I am thankful we are not disappointed in you. We have been eager to hear everything we could about you."

"And here I am to tell you all you wish to know."

It was the same old story, but the friendly interest of the listeners made the oft-told tale less wearisome to the narrator. At last he said :

"Mr. Anslow, in one way I am indebted to you for much of my success."

"How can that be?" was asked quickly.

"Don't you remember that you used to talk to me about your work, telling me what you wished to make, and explaining how force could be applied to produce certain results? You set me to thinking. My visits to your workshop were more to me than any school I ever attended."

"It does me good to hear you say that. I

have always had plenty of ideas, but I could not carry them out to the end. It seems to me I have never really finished anything."

At this Miss Rebecca shook her head, saying:

"You have finished a great many things, Richard. Your life has not been so useless as you would have people think. Now, while I am attending to the dairy and preparing dinner, you and Thaddeus can go to the workshop."

"I should be glad to see the inside of that shop again," responded the young man, whose name had always been given its full measure in this house. "I have wished many and many a time, when I was working in my garret, that I could lease your shop with the tools in it."

"You could have had the use of it all and welcome," was replied. "I cannot imagine how you could accomplish so much with so little."

"I did it because I felt that I must. I seemed to have no choice in the matter."

There was the shop, looking much as it did ten years before, with unfinished pieces of work heaped upon the bench which occupied a large part of the room.

"Here is the very thing which set me to thinking," exclaimed Thad Byam, pointing to a simple cog-wheel with lever attached.

"Your invention cannot be anything like that?"

"No, Mr. Anslow, it is not ; but all the same, that gave me the idea which kept running in my head until it brought other ideas with it. I can describe it in no other way. I worked from the light I had, and so more light was given. Of course I experimented, and my experiments were often failures ; but I learned something from every failure, and I never made the same mistake twice."

"You are a brave man. But what if after all you had failed in the end ?"

"I should have started over again on a new track. But it could not be an entire failure, because I had gained so much experience as a worker, that I could command higher wages than before. Not the least, too, of what I gained was the steady application and perseverance that will make me a better man as long as I live."

"That must be so, my young friend. I told you my whole life had been like these pieces of work. I could begin well, but I lacked the application and perseverance necessary to complete my work. It does me good to see and talk with one who has accomplished so much. I expected a good deal of you. When you signed a pledge of total abstinence from liquor and tobacco, you laid a foundation, broad and deep, for the best of which you were capable."

"That pledge was my salvation, Mr. Anslow. Without it I should not have been so strong to resist temptation; and if I had once acquired the habit of spending my evenings in beer gardens or saloons, I could never have turned away from them to work hour after hour in my lonely garret."

"You would not have had the strength to do it."

"I should have had neither strength nor inclination to do it. I should have just drifted through one evening after another; spending my wages as fast as I earned them, and growing more restless and reckless every day. There are thousands and thousands of young men doing just that."

"Yes, and at the same time complaining of bad luck and an unequal distribution of this world's goods. They are discouraged before they know what they might do, and old before they realize what a fortune they have in the strength and vigor of youth. Beer, too, is in the end worse for them than whiskey."

"It leads to whiskey."

"I know it does, but it often poisons a man's blood before he takes to whiskey; and just because he can drink so much of it without becoming absolutely intoxicated, I count it the worst of all drinks. I count the young man

doomed who begins with beer. A beer drunkard is the most disgusting drunkard of all."

"I agree with you in that, Mr. Anslow. Yet some people talk about drinking beer to keep a man from intemperance."

"I know they do, but they who talk in that way are either fools or liars. Think of a brewery in your town among these grand old hills! It is a desecration. It seems as though the voters of the town must have been crazy to allow Stafford to come there and exempt him from taxation. He will bring money into the town, but with it he will bring a class of workmen different from any about here now."

"And with them drunkenness, Sabbath-breaking, and profanity. I don't suppose I should have had any influence; but if I had been at home I would have lifted up my voice against it."

"If I had lived in your town I would have made some plain statements of facts that I can substantiate by the highest medical authority, although I presume Dr. Lash would have disputed me. He recommends beer to his patients as the best tonic they can take."

"So grandmother told me; and if he uses stimulants as people say he does, his judgment is not to be trusted in anything. Jacob Hill says he has no doubt that Stafford paid him

a large fee for praising beer as a healthful drink."

"I presume he did. I have heard there was a good deal of money distributed around where it would buy votes and influence."

"No doubt of it, Mr. Anslow. Jacob Hill told me there were more bottles of liquor carried to town meeting when the vote was taken to exempt Stafford's business from taxation, than was ever seen at such a meeting before. Everybody who would could take a drink. It was just handed 'round, free to all. Of course Stafford paid for it and found it a good investment."

"He knew how to manage that. He would stop at nothing, if he could carry his point. He will be a curse to the town, the county, and the State. I hear, too, that he is determined to ruin Mr. Brenner because Miss Brenner refused to be his wife."

"In that he will find himself checkmated. Mr. Brenner has friends who will come to the rescue."

"I think he has. Miss Brenner called here last summer, and Rebecca was delighted with her. She came with a party to visit the spring, but was alone when she called here."

"You will not sell the spring, Mr. Anslow?"

"Never. Neither will my sister. After we are both gone it will not matter to us."

This last remark introduced a new topic of conversation, which at last drifted back to the workshop, and was continued until Miss Rebecca appeared to summon them to dinner.

They had not been long at the table when a bareheaded, barefooted boy appeared outside the door and called Mr. Anslow.

"What is the matter?" asked the gentleman kindly; going to the boy, and with his hand smoothing the tangled curls which were evidently quite unused to being smoothed.

"Father is bad to-day, just like he used to be, and I was afraid he would hurt Lessie," replied the boy, striving to repress his sobs.

"Where is Lessie?"

"Behind the shed. I thought perhaps you would let her stay here till father gets better."

"What will you do?"

"Go back and take care of father. I don't mind his hurting me, but I can't let him hurt Lessie."

"Wait till we have had our dinner and I will go home with you."

"Don't let father know I told you he was bad. He would most kill me if you did. He won't mind Lessie's being gone, because she stays away from him mostly. I'm sorry, but her dress is awful torn. I can't get used to sewing, and she runs in the woods with me so much she tears her dress awful."

"Never mind about that, John. Bring her here, and we will take care of her. Have you had your dinner?"

"No, sir; there wasn't any dinner; but I don't care for any, if you will only be good enough to give Lessie a piece of bread."

"You shall both of you have dinner when we are through."

"Oh, Mr. Anslow; you are so good. Father has been good, too, till he went off yesterday and came back with a bottle full of something awful for him to drink, instead of something for us to eat. Lessie and I were so afraid we crept up-stairs and hid under the eaves. Now I don't know what will become of us."

"Don't be discouraged, my lad. You and Lessie shall have a good dinner, and I will go over and see your father."

CHAPTER XI.

AT THE OLD JOYCE HOUSE.

"HAVER is a new neighbor, living in the Joyce house," said Mr. Anslow, as he resumed his seat at the table. "While the children are eating their dinner I will go over and see what condition he is in."

"I would like to go with you," responded Thad Byam. "It is a long time since I have been that way, but when I was a boy I used to go to the house with my grandmother. She and old Mrs. Joyce were good friends, and always exchanged visits two or three times a year. They walked the distance, too; so a visit was quite an event with them."

"I used to wonder what they could find to talk about so long and so fast. They were both poor, and working hard to earn a living, though Mrs. Joyce was worse off than grandmother; because she had a drunken son and his family hanging on her. When she died the family was broken up, and I never knew what became of them."

"They were gone before I came, and the

house has been empty most of the time. Haver went in there because he was tired of tramping and must have a shelter of some kind for himself and his children."

During the walk to the Joyce house more was told of the wretched man who had brought his entire worldly possessions in a pack which he said he had carried for more than a hundred miles. He had obtained some work among the farmers, who had paid him in food and pieces of old furniture, which had helped to make his poor home more comfortable.

The owner of the house of which he had taken possession lived in a distant town, so that he was not likely to be troubled in regard to rent; the less so, as it was considered of little value. Summer rains and winter snows found their way through the fast decaying roof, while doors sagged upon their hinges and windows admitted every passing breeze.

As Mr. Anslow and his companion came near the house they heard angry shouts and threats of vengeance upon the children, whose names were mingled with terrible oaths. Then followed crash upon crash, after which the raving man appeared for a moment at an open window, brandishing his arms as if menacing some invisible foe.

"He is stark mad," exclaimed Thad Byam.

"He will destroy everything he can lay his hands on. He needs a cold-water douche, and with your permission I will undertake to administer it. That will bring him to his senses sooner than anything else. He is like a wild beast."

"He must have brought liquor home with him last evening, and he will probably keep on drinking until that is gone. He told me once that as soon as he got a taste of liquor he cared for nothing else. I think he killed his wife. I don't know as he shot her or beat her to death, yet I am sure he considers himself her murderer. But we must hurry or he will smash everything in the house to splinters."

For the next five minutes there was a fierce struggle, in which, at last, Mr. Haver was overpowered; to find himself deluged with cold water until he begged for mercy. Then he was assisted to his feet and ordered to "walk lively," which order he obeyed as well as his condition would allow.

Meanwhile Mr. Anslow found a flask partly filled with liquor, which he emptied, thus calling forth a yell of rage from its owner. Presently, however, he became more quiet, although still compelled to remain upon his feet.

"I can manage him now, and my sister would be sorry to miss the opportunity for a friendly

talk with you," said the elder man after a short time. "She is getting to be an old woman; but her heart will never grow old, and she counts you as one of her friends. She certainly is a friend to you."

"I am honored by her friendship, Mr. Anslow. I had many friends when I was a boy, and I received a great deal of good advice, but Miss Rebecca talked to me differently from any other one. I thought she was the grandest lady in the world."

"She might have lived like a grand lady, with servants at her call, if she had loved her brother less. I can never half repay her for her kindness and devotion. She ought to be in a different home, and I know she misses many things to which she was once accustomed, but she never complains."

"Your pardon, Mr. Anslow; but I have wondered why you came to live in such a lonely place."

"It is not strange that you should wonder. Sometime I may tell you all about it. It was not because we were too poor to live elsewhere."

"I never thought that, Mr. Anslow. When I was a boy I thought you must be very rich, you had so many books and papers, and a great many things, such as I didn't see in other houses. Once or twice I had a peep into your

china closet, and I was sure no one could have what I called such pretty dishes unless they were very rich."

"We are not very rich, but we have enough to keep us in comfort, so we need not worry about the future."

This was more than Thad Byam had before known of these friends, although as he said, when he was a boy he had thought them rich. They did not mingle much with their neighbors, except when they could render some kind service.

The hours spent with them had been much to the poor lad whom so many regarded simply as one to be tolerated for a longer or shorter time, as circumstances might determine.

Miss Rebecca was expecting him. John and Lessie Haver were eating their dinner, which they would enjoy all the more if left to themselves.

"Their father is a wretch," said the young man. "He ought to be shut up where it would be impossible for him to get a drop of liquor."

"Somebody sold him the liquor, Thaddeus. It is not likely any one gave it to him. The liquor-seller should bear his full share of punishment. In this case I believe some one else deserves quite as much blame as Mr. Haver. I don't hear much of what is done in the village,

but I have been told that there are men there determined to drag every other man down to their own level. They drink liquor, and they are angry if any one objects to it."

"I suppose the new saloon furnishes the liquor."

"That is what I have been told, and I presume, if the truth could be known, Mr. Haver was persuaded to go into the saloon and take a drink. He couldn't have had much money, but John says he had enough to buy a big bag of flour. He told me, himself, that in his father's house everybody drank beer, and thought it as harmless as water."

"If he was like most other beer-drinkers, he wanted something stronger after a while."

"Yes, he did; but now, Thaddeus, tell me more of yourself."

Listening then to a more detailed account of his manner of living, as he planned and experimented, she said earnestly :

"How happy I should have been to give you the best dinner I could prepare. Bread and water is prisoners' diet."

"But I was not a prisoner, Miss Rebecca. I had the largest liberty, because I had the power of choice."

"I should have pitied you had I known how you were living."

"I never pitied myself. I was only sacrificing a lesser good for a greater. My grandmother used to tell me over and over again that nothing great or good was ever accomplished without some sacrifice. It was hard to make me believe it, but when I was once convinced I determined to make the sacrifice, whatever it might be.

"I don't know yet what will be required of me. As I look back it does not seem much for me to have lived and dressed plainly. Instead of pitying me, Miss Rebecca, you would have been amused if you had seen me counting my money and calculating to a penny how much I could afford to spend on myself and still have enough left to pay for the material necessary for my work. It was close counting."

"And I make no doubt you got the most your money would pay for."

"I think I did. In a good many ways I was like a boy, as I am now. I was just as eager for my Sunday morning breakfast as I ever was for the turnovers grandmother used to make for me. As you have seen, I still have a boy's appetite."

"That is an especial blessing. Thaddeus, you have a great deal for which to be thankful. You have good health, good habits, and good prospects for the future. If you should become rich

you will know how to make the most and best of what you have. It is the dram-selling and dram-drinking that makes a large part of the poverty and suffering in the world. You must have learned that."

"Indeed I have, Miss Rebecca."

"Not as I have learned it, Thaddeus. Oh! I thought I would never say another word about it; but the fire burns, and sometimes the flames will burst forth."

This exclamation was followed by a somewhat prolonged silence, broken at length by John Haver, who came to the door of the sitting-room to thank Miss Rebecca for such a good dinner, and apologize for having eaten so much.

"I didn't mean to," he said shyly.

"Go back and eat more," answered Miss Rebecca with a smile. "I wish you and Lessie to eat all you can. I should be glad to have you clear the table."

"I guess Lessie will, because she didn't want so much as I did. I gave her most all there was yesterday, and saved a crust for her this morning."

"Why, child, didn't you have anything to eat yesterday?"

"No, ma'am, not after breakfast, and I only had just a little then, because, you know, I couldn't let Lessie be hungry. Mother told me

not to; and she said if father was very bad, I must take Lessie away where he couldn't find her.

"I don't know but I'll have to take her away now, 'though I'll be awful sorry to; we've had such a beautiful time ever since we came to the house where we've been staying. Lessie hasn't been real hungry once till this time, and I haven't been hungry much."

"Well, now, John, just go back to the table and finish your dinner, and by and by we will talk about what you better do."

When Mr. Anslow returned he reported his neighbor as sleeping soundly.

"I gave him a vigorous rubbing and got him into dry clothing, and by that time he began to appreciate the situation. The first thing, he asked me where his children were; and when I told him they were safe he was evidently much relieved.

"In reply to my questions he acknowledged that he went into the saloon and drank there, and afterward bought a flask of liquor to bring home with him. He said he had no idea of doing it, but some young men half pushed him in and put a glass of liquor to his lips.

"He said he started for home with a full flask, and didn't taste of liquor on the way, but drank last night and again this morning. He will

sleep now for a few hours. What he will do when he wakes no one can tell. I presume he did not tell me the exact truth, but I think that in the main his story was correct.

“If this is the beginning of the better times Stafford claims to have in store for your town, God only knows what will be the ending.”

CHAPTER XII.

HOW TO BE RICH.

THADDEUS BYAM went down the village street; not whistling as was his wont, but striding along without uttering a sound, looking neither to the right hand nor the left until he came to where several men were busily at work with pickaxe and spade.

"So you are all here," he said, addressing a group of three, at a little distance from others.

"Yes, we are here," was replied a little gruffly. "Where else should we be? We are not so rich that we can afford to take a vacation and go into the country to enjoy ourselves."

"I can tell you how to do it," responded the newcomer.

"How to be rich?"

"Yes; it is easy enough."

"Then tell away. We want to know."

"Spend less than you earn. Stop drinking liquor of every kind and throw away your pipes and tobacco. Keep right on at work, and when the year comes 'round you will begin to be rich."

"Just what I expected. But you will have to preach somewhere else before you get any converts. That kind of nonsense won't go down here. If luck is against us we can't turn it that way, and you know it. Because you are better off than we are, it's no reason you should stand there and tell us what to do."

"That may be, but there is a good reason why I should tell you what *not* to do."

"What is it?" asked Tim Durrell.

"I want to ask you a question before I answer yours, and I shall believe whatever you say. You always used to tell the truth, no matter where it hit, and I expect you will now."

"Go ahead with your question. I don't know as I've any occasion for telling you a lie."

"No more have you, Tim. Do you know a man by the name of Haver who lives in the old Joyce house?"

"I have seen him," was replied, after some hesitation.

"Did you see him day before yesterday?"

Again Tim Durrell hesitated, but at length came the reply:

"Yes."

"Do you know who asked him to go into the saloon, and when he refused, pushed him in and put a glass of liquor to his lips?"

"It's none of your business, Thad Byam."

You can't rule all creation. What is Haver to you, anyway? You needn't come 'round here showing off and expecting us to knuckle to you, for we sha'n't do it."

This was said by Dick Wilson and emphasized with an oath, but neither Thad Byam nor Tim Durrell gave him any heed.

"I suppose I know all about it," said the latter. "I was in the scrape. I didn't think we were doing any hurt. I didn't suppose he would drink so much."

"You didn't suppose, either, that he had a boy and girl at home waiting for him to bring them something to eat. You didn't suppose he would get so crazy drunk that they would be in danger of being killed by him.

"I saw them yesterday, half starved. The girl's name is Lessie, and she looks as your sister Lizzie did the summer before she died. I thought of Lizzie the minute I set eyes on her. The poor child was nearly starved, and would have been worse off if her brother hadn't gone without food himself so that she could have more. It is a hard thing to see such children hungry. If Lizzie had lived, you wouldn't let her go hungry."

"That I wouldn't," was responded in a husky voice.

"Would you give up liquor and tobacco for her, Tim?"

"I would give up anything for her. You know I would."

"I hope you would, Tim. But why couldn't you let Haver alone? What harm had he ever done you?"

"Not any; and I didn't mean to do him any harm."

"Here, Tim, let me talk a while," exclaimed Dick Wilson. "We thought Haver wanted some liquor, and might as well have it as to go without. There were half a dozen or more of us in the scrape, and it's none of your business about it. It makes me mad to see folks setting themselves up to be so awful good. I was mad when you signed the pledge I've heard so much about. That was when you begun, and now it seems as though you thought you owned the town. Better buy the Brenner place and set up for a country gentleman."

"I wish I did own the town, Dick. If I did there never would be a brewery here. That saloon would be closed in five minutes, and the liquor cleared out of the old tavern. There wouldn't be a drop of the stuff to be bought or sold, if I could have my way. Does Stafford own the saloon?"

"You might ask him. He knows all about it, and he is coming this way."

Thad Byam turned to look at Clyde Stafford,

and was surprised to see so young a man. He came nearer, stopping to speak with the workmen, for each of whom he had a pleasant word.

"Have I the pleasure of meeting Mr. Byam?" he asked directly after.

"My name is Byam," was replied somewhat coldly.

"A name to which you have done honor. Your towns-people are justly proud of you, and you in turn have reason to be proud of your town. It only needs more business to bring in more money, and it will soon be one of the first towns in the State. Business will be lively here this summer. With a good home market, as they are likely to have, the farmers will realize better profits from their land. I am very glad to have met you, Mr. Byam. One is naturally curious to see a young man who has accomplished what you have, and whose praises are in every mouth."

All this was said in the most cordial manner, yet he to whom it was addressed made no response. At last the speaker added, with some confusion:

"I don't know but I have interrupted a confidential interview between old friends. If so, I beg your pardon."

"It ain't nothing confidential," said Lufkin Brown, who prided himself upon not being

afraid to speak his mind before anybody. "Thad is one of the cold-water men, and he's got a gift for preaching. He's just down on liquor and tobacco; and as for the brewery, it will ruin all the men and boys within twenty miles. That's what's the matter with him."

"I shall hope to prove that he is mistaken about the brewery," answered Clyde Stafford. "As for the rest, I am willing every man should judge for himself."

"So am I, under certain conditions," responded Thaddeus Byam. "But when a man is struggling to gain a foothold where he can stand firmly, I don't believe in pushing him down into the bottomless pit."

"No more do I, Mr. Byam. I believe in helping everybody. I have taken a fancy to this town, and I intend to make my home here. Of course I wish to help develop its resources and improve things all around."

"Not much help, Mr. Stafford, in taking a man's money for what he doesn't need and what he is better off without. To my mind, that is what every brewer and seller of beer is doing."

"You have a right to your opinion, Mr. Byam, but it is well for my enterprise that the majority of your towns-people thought differently. I propose to bring money into the town instead of taking it away."

“What else will you bring, Mr. Stafford? You will bring temptation to evil habits, and for every dollar you leave here you will take five from the pockets of your patrons. I did not seek this interview, and I suppose it would hardly be called polite for me to condemn your business at our first meeting; but I do condemn it wholly and entirely.”

“You have the characteristic of frankness, Mr. Byam; but in this matter I have the inside track and propose to keep it. You will find it hard to make people believe that cold water is the only drink fit for a civilized man. Something more is wanted to stimulate the brain and quicken the blood; and in providing for this want, I claim that brewers are benefiting the country.

“A man can’t do the best work of which he is capable on such meagre diet as temperance fanatics describe. Excuse me. I wish to explain. I am a temperance man, but such intemperate denunciation of some of the good things the Lord has given us, seems to me absolute fanaticism, if nothing worse.”

“I never heard that the Lord gave us beer.”

“He has given us the material for making it, as He has given us the material for making bread. The same principle of fermentation is applied in one case as in the other.”

"That may be, but woe be to the man who takes what should be made into bread for the hungry and worse than wastes it by transforming it into beer."

"Did you ever drink a glass of beer, Mr. Byam? Do you know what it is?"

"It is enough for me to know what it does. In all my life I have drank one glass, and only one."

"If you had drank more you would be better able to judge of its effects; and, I venture to say, you would be in better health."

"Better health! I am perfectly well. I don't remember that I was ever sick in my life, except when I tried to learn to use tobacco; and I have sometimes worked twenty hours out of twenty-four. My stomach is all right, my head never aches, and I am good for a ten-mile tramp any time. Can you beat that record, Mr. Stafford?"

"I don't know that I can, Mr. Byam, but you must acknowledge that not many can do what you claim for yourself."

"More could do it if they would let tobacco and all alcoholic drinks alone. They are what take the strength and poison the blood of so many young men. They take the money too. I know men who spend half their wages for beer and tobacco, and no one can make me be-

lieve they are better off for wasting their money on the vile stuff."

That Stafford was getting the worst of the argument was quite apparent to the listeners, who were now as ready to applaud their old companion as they had been to condemn him a few minutes before. They approved of the brewery. They had been paid liberally for their votes; nevertheless, they enjoyed the discomfiture of one who could ride while they walked, and stand idle while they worked. Equal, however, to the occasion was the man who said courteously:

"I trust, Mr. Byam, you will some day change your opinion of me. I cannot confess to being a thief and a robber, although I claim the privilege of supplying the demand for a healthy drink, such as your good physician here recommends to his patients. I wish you success in your business venture, and I intend to succeed in mine. Good-morning."

CHAPTER XIII.

TIM DURRELL.

"Good for you, Thad," exclaimed Tim Durrell. "You told Stafford the truth, and he knows it. He is after the money. That is all he cares for, and it's no use pretending anything else. As for old Dr. Lash, he'll swear to anything when he's well primed with brandy and opium; especially if there's a good fee in prospect. Say, Thad, don't the brewers make the biggest kind of profits?"

"They do, and of course the more beer they can sell the more money they can make. There isn't a better paying business in the country, and that is what makes the brewers so determined to keep it up."

"Well, you see I never thought much about it. Stafford has a smooth tongue, and he talked so well he made a good many believe that his starting a brewery here would be a benefit to the town. But yesterday most every voter had a pamphlet come through the post-office, telling all about beer and what the brewers are trying to do. Have you seen one of them?"

"No; this is the first I have heard of them."

"Then you didn't send them. I thought perhaps you did. But I tell you what it is, it opened my eyes pretty wide; and if half I read is true, making beer is awful mean business; and drinking it is just poisoning your blood and bringing all manner of diseases with it. Dick and Luf had a pamphlet, but they wouldn't read theirs."

"I wasn't going to waste my time over any such nonsense," said Dick. "I had something better to do."

"So had I," chimed in Luf. "I took mine to light my pipe."

"I read every word of mine, twice through, and then I dreamed about it. I only wish I had known, six months ago, what I do now. I wish I knew who sent the pamphlets."

"I wish I could see one," said Thad Byam.

"Here is mine," responded Tim Durrell. "I put mine in my pocket when I had done with it last night."

Thad Byam took the paper extended to him, and seating himself upon a pile of lumber, read every word of it from beginning to end, returning it to the owner with the comment, "That is a hard story, Tim."

"Is it harder than the truth?"

"No."

"Then you believe it?"

"I believe that, and more too."

"Then——" Here the speaker paused, and coming nearer to his old friend, said half under his breath, "I wish I had signed the pledge when you did. I couldn't be as smart as you are, but I should be different from what I am now. I was mad when I knew how much better off you are than the rest of us, but you deserve it. You started right and we started wrong."

"We started pretty near together, Tim."

"You switched off before we got under much headway, and since then you've been going right away from us. I don't suppose anybody thinks I ever feel bad, but I tell you, Thad, I haven't forgot Lizzie. She wanted me to be good."

"It isn't too late now. Sign my pledge and go with me. I will help you and promise you the good luck you talk so much about."

"I wish I could. I'm sorry about Haver. We only meant to have some fun with the old fellow."

"He is not very old, Tim, and you wouldn't have thought there was much fun if you had seen him and his children, as I did."

"Don't say any more about it, Thad, but let me come and see you this evening, will you?"

"Let you come? I shall be glad to have

you. Come over this afternoon, so we can have plenty of time for a long talk. Do you think Dick and Luf would like to come?"

"I don't know. I want to see you alone. They don't feel about some things as I do. They didn't read their pamphlets."

"All right. Come by yourself."

"I will. I must go to work now."

"And I must go home. I have a little job I want to do before you come."

So saying, Thad Byam went his way; having seen and heard enough to convince him that no means would be left untried to bring customers to the new saloon. Whether Stafford was pecuniarily interested in this saloon he did not know; yet it was certain that the saloon-keeper and the brewer would make common cause against every influence tending to restrict the liquor traffic.

Home through the lindens, where bees were still gathering stores of sweets; resting for a little on the bench which now stood steady and strong, supported by substantial props. Then hurrying on, Thad Byam informed his grandmother that a guest might be expected.

"I have hope of Tim, and I want to give him a first-rate supper," said the young man. "Suppose we have some fried trout for supper. I can catch some, and you can cook them better

than anybody else. Tim used to think there was nothing quite so good, and I don't believe he gets many dainties at home."

"There is no chance for dainties there. Everything is dreadfully shiftless. His stepmother is a poor housekeeper, and she always speaks of Tim as being a terrible trial. I don't so much wonder that he stays away from home as he does. Everybody says he is a good fellow to work if he would only let liquor alone."

"I know he is, grandmother, and I am going to see what I can do for him. He is worth saving."

Could Tim Durrell have listened to the kind words then said of him, and realized how truly his presence was desired in the little cottage, he would have looked forward to the proposed visit with more of pleasure. He had made an effort to appear at his best, and yet he so felt his unworthiness he was tempted to turn back and go on in his reckless career.

On his way he stopped more than once to think it all over; deciding finally to redeem his promise at any cost. When he reached his destination he received so cordial a welcome that he soon forgot his misgivings, and felt himself quite at home with Mrs. Byam, who talked to him of the mother and sister he had loved and lost.

He was ready to sign the pledge presented for his signature, and asked for the prayers of his friends, that he might have strength to keep it.

"I *must* keep it," he said. "It is my only hope. I feel as though I had come to where two roads meet and I must make a choice for life between the two. There were two roads when Thad took one and I took the other; but he thinks there's another chance for me, and I'm going to try it. It will be a hard case for me, but I must try."

"You can do it, Tim, if it is hard, and you'll have reason to be thankful for it every hour of your life. I only wish we could save all the boys and young men in town."

"So do I, Thad, but it won't do for me to say anything about that till I've done something toward saving myself."

"You must depend on the Lord to save you," said Mrs. Byam.

"Yes, ma'am; I know that," was replied. "I will try not to forget it, but I must do my part."

"Certainly you must, and you must help others too. Now the enemy is coming in upon us like a flood, we have need to be up and doing."

"It is strange that I didn't realize what a curse a brewery would be to the town. I heard

a good deal of talk about it, but it didn't seem to take hold of me. There's nothing like money and liquor for keeping folks from good, hard, honest thinking; and they were both distributed 'round pretty free at town-meeting time.

"Stafford talks about wanting to help the town. All he cares for is to make money, and that he is bound to do at any cost to others."

"We shouldn't have had that saloon if it hadn't been for him."

"You are right there, Mrs. Byam, and it's a bad place. A good many boys and young men have drank their first glass of liquor there. I don't care what they pretend; there don't many go in there without taking something to drink. Other customers ain't wanted. I know, for I've been inside the ring; and that's going to make it hard for me. I sha'n't say any more about it than I'm obliged to, but I shall have to fight my way. I've had a glimpse of what I might be if I'd let liquor and tobacco alone, and God helping me, I'll do the best I can."

He made an effort to tell Mrs. Byam what this visit had been to him, but only succeeded in thanking her for her kindness. It had been many a day since he had eaten such a supper or shared in so genial a conversation. Before leaving these friends his plans were well matured. He was to return to the city with Thad Byam,

but until then he must work in order to pay some debts foolishly incurred.

Tim Durrell's "conversion" could not long remain a secret. The change in his habits was soon the subject of general comment. Some who had watched him from his boyhood congratulated and encouraged him. Thad Byam was his constant counsellor and support; managing to see him every day, and always giving him some word of cheer which helped him to bear the sneers and taunts of those who would have dragged him back to the depths from which he was struggling to rise.

CHAPTER XIV.

WHO SENT THE TRACTS?

To say that Clyde Stafford was indignant would give but a faint conception of his feelings, when for the second time there was a distribution of temperance literature from the post-office.

"Incendiary documents" he called them, when in fact they were only two-page tracts, containing quotations from internal revenue reports, medical reviews, and scientific papers; with an estimate of the amount paid for liquor by a moderate drinker. This estimate had especial reference to the consumption of beer, and was therefore especially obnoxious to the young man who claimed for himself such generous motives in the establishment of a brewery.

"It is a clear case of persecution," he said to one who professed to be in sympathy with him. "If I knew who sent the falsehoods here I would bring a suit against him or her, whichever the sender may be."

"Could you prove that the statements made are falsehoods?" was asked in reply to this outburst.

"Of course they are false. Any unprejudiced person would see that at once. Do you suppose a business would be tolerated which wasted the resources of the country and ruined the health of the people in the manner described in these last tracts or leaflets? The idea is absurd. It carries a lie upon the very face of it. I am wondering what the fanatics will do next. I hope you don't believe the stuff."

"I know the arithmetic part is all right. It is just a plain sum in multiplication, that anybody who knows anything about figures can prove in ten minutes; and there's no mistake but what a regular beer-drinker spends a good deal of money for his drink."

"What of it? It costs something for what a man eats; but I never heard of anybody living a great while without eating."

"That is the very point, Stafford. That is what I thought most about when I calculated that sum. I said to myself: A man can live without beer or tobacco, but he can't live without bread. Now if a man has a family and earns only a certain amount every day, he needs to spend his wages to the very best advantage; so they will bring him and his family the greatest amount of comfort. You won't deny that."

"I won't deny anything. You have learned your lesson well. The fanatics have said the

same thing hundreds of times, and I admit that it sounds plausible. But I claim that every man has a right to decide for himself how he shall spend his money."

"His family must be considered. A man must put his family first. I'm not going back on you, Stafford; but I tell you what, my tract set me to thinking. Did you have one?"

"Yes."

"And did you read it?"

"Of course I did. I heard that all which came through the office were alike, and I wanted to see for myself what the stuff was. All I have to say about it now is, that I consider it a cowardly way of fighting. It is like striking a man in the dark, when he can't defend himself, because he can't see his assailant."

It was evidently the intention that every family in town should receive a copy of the leaflet, as well as every workman without family ties; and the fact that the distribution was so general excited curiosity which would be satisfied only with a careful perusal. Stafford's annoyance, also, increased the interest, so that the subject was universally discussed.

"If I had known all this six months ago, I should have voted differently," said more than one who read and re-read the statistics until they could be repeated word for word.

People began to talk about the saloon. Many who had been indifferent in regard to it found themselves compelled to consider its influence. Thad Byam denounced it in season and out of season; warning parents who had years before warned him.

"We shall be rid of one meddler when that Byam is gone," remarked the saloon-keeper to one of his best customers. "He has told Haver's story so often he has really made himself believe it."

"He has made others believe it too. We all know it is true, and more's the shame. In his worst days Thad Byam never was known to tell a lie, and he certainly wouldn't do it now when he has so much to lose. You don't know him as well as the people do who have always lived here.

"All he says about Haver is true, and you won't gain anything by denying it. I want a dram when I want it, and I don't count it anybody's business; but I wouldn't be guilty of selling liquor to such a man as Haver. I'm alone in the world, so it doesn't make much difference what becomes of me, but Haver has two children. It's a hard fight for a man like him, who has been used to taking his drams, to give them up; and now he has started over again, I hope whoever puts a glass to his lips will be

punished for it. You'll kill your saloon if you allow such work. Richard Anslow has undertaken to help Haver up, and he is going to do it."

"Who is Richard Anslow?"

"A man who knows a good deal more about his own business than his neighbors do."

"What is Haver to him?"

"You must ask him if you want to know."

"Is he the man who owns Cold Spring?"

"He and his sister own it."

"Then I know all about him I want to. I am thankful he don't live in this town."

"It might be better for the town if he did. There can't anybody say anything against him or his sister without saying what isn't true. They are good people."

"Would they be likely to send these tracts everybody is talking about?"

"I don't know."

"Who could have sent them?"

This question was often asked. Some accused Thad Byam of sending them; but upon his denial, the charge was withdrawn. As there was no postmark upon the envelopes, no clue could be obtained which might betray the sender; but that the work so well begun was likely to be continued was proven by the third appeal, which commanded even more attention than

either of the preceding. This was brought by mail from a different direction than the others, thus making the mystery still more complete.

Meanwhile there had been an influx of summer visitors. Every room in the new hotel was occupied. Farm-houses were open to guests who were willing to pay liberally for large, airy chambers and appetizing food. Berries, both wild and cultivated, with cream and butter of the richest and sweetest, were served in old-fashioned dining-rooms on old-fashioned tables. It was a paradise to city people, who did not fail in appreciation of the generous provision made for them.

But there was "that saloon"; a blot upon the otherwise fair landscape, and a source of constant anxiety to many a tired mother longing for rest.

"Can it not be closed?" was asked; and the question was answered in a tone of such utter indifference as might challenge an apology for its utterance.

"Public opinion tolerates it, and you know it is impossible to go against public opinion. If all felt as I do the saloon would be closed, but I am only one."

This was said by a man professing to be in favor of temperance. He wished this to be distinctly understood, although he was careful not

to incur the displeasure of those who differed from him. He could not see the wisdom of extreme measures so long as there was such a variety of opinions in regard to the best manner of combating the evil of intemperance. He was waiting for the right opportunity, when some effort could be made which promised success.

"It is not possible that you are the only person in town opposed to that saloon," was the response to his somewhat elaborate expression of his opinions.

"Certainly not; but the majority of the towns-people think best not to interfere, and so I suppose we must be satisfied with doing what we can to counteract its influence."

"That is the kind of talk that keeps the saloon running," exclaimed Jacob Hill, when this was repeated to him. "Our village used to be a quiet, orderly place, but since Stafford got a foothold here everything has changed. The boarding-house he is building for his workmen won't make things any better. Then there is the new grocery-store his constituency is expected to patronize. It will be pretty much all of a piece, and beer is to rule."

"No doubt of that," was replied. "Now his father is at the new hotel, we may expect to see things pushed to the last degree. I have heard that the old man will try again to buy Cold

Spring with ten acres of land adjoining. If he can do that, he will build the largest hotel in this part of the State, and the town authorities will be obliged to lay out a road for him."

"There is no chance for him to buy Cold Spring, and there are not many property-holders in town who would sell him or his son a square foot of land. They will never own the Brenner estate, either. Clyde Stafford will find that plan will miscarry."

CHAPTER XV.

STAFFORD, SENIOR.

"HAVE you heard of Stafford's last move?"

"I am not sure that I have," was replied to the above question. "His moves are so many and so frequent, it is not easy to keep track of them."

"It is not necessary either, but as the last of which I have heard promises important results, I am interested; and the more so, since in a certain way it threatens injury to a man for whom I have a profound respect. It is a business venture in his son's name and I presume he considers it the shrewdest he has yet made.

"He and his family spent last summer in the town where Luke Brenner's old homestead is situated, and the upshot of the matter is that he has bought land there on which to build a brewery. It is all in Clyde's name, but everybody knows that the old man must furnish the money."

"And you say a brewery is to be built in Brenner's native town! I wonder at that. Brenner was one of our ultra temperance men,

and particularly severe on beer-drinking. I should suppose he would fight a brewery for all he is worth."

"Once he would, and have carried his point; but I have been told that since his failure he has withdrawn almost entirely from active life. His failure completely crushed him, although within a few months he has rallied somewhat, and if it was not for a mortgage on his place he might possibly redeem himself in time."

"I heard he mortgaged his country seat to pay his last debt."

"He did; and the worst of it now is, that Clyde Stafford holds the mortgage and has foreclosed on it. It seems from what I have heard that Brenner was so discouraged he was ready to give up everything without making any fight at all, and Stafford is determined to push matters to the last extremity. You remember Brenner had a daughter."

"Yes; and a bright, handsome girl she was. It must be two years since I have seen her, but she struck me then as one sure to make a beauty and a belle. She must be a very attractive young lady."

"Clyde Stafford evidently thought so. It is understood that he offered himself to her and was rejected; and then bought up the Brenner mortgage in order to be revenged. The death

of the original mortgagee gave him an opportunity to do this; as the heirs wanted the money and he was ready to advance it."

"I should suppose Brenner might have made some arrangement to prevent that."

"As near as I can learn, he made no effort to do so. Young Byam told me about it, and he says the Brenner place is worth twice the amount of the mortgage."

"You mean Byam, the inventor, that everybody is talking about?"

"Yes; his home is in the same town as Luke Brenner's place, and he is determined in some way to help the old man. He says he will put another mortgage on his invention, but what he will take the mortgage out of Stafford's clutches."

"He can raise money on that, but they say he won't sell any part of it."

"No; he calculates to have the full benefit of it himself. He has worked hard enough for it, and he is too sharp a business man to miss his chances now."

"Hilliard is responsible for Brenner's failure. He was owing Brenner sixty thousand dollars, and besides that Brenner's name was on his paper, some say, for as much more. All that was a dead loss. Hilliard beggared himself to save his son, and left Brenner in the lurch."

"Did you ever know how much it cost Hilliard to settle up for George?"

"I don't know exactly, but a good deal over a hundred thousand, and it wouldn't be strange if it cost him twice that. Then George had been drawing on his father for years; so that really the old man had been growing poorer long before the crash came.

"At one time he and Clyde Stafford were great friends, but they were differently made up. Stafford would drink moderately and keep his expenses within reasonable limits, while Hilliard would indulge himself without stint, and plunge headlong into the worst excesses. When he was under the influence of liquor he was perfectly reckless. He was the fastest man of a fast set, and such a life as he lived costs money. His father hushed up a good many scandals that would have put him in a worse position before the public than he is now.

"It was virtually Brenner's money that saved him from the State prison."

"Exactly, and Hilliard had no right to spend money in that way when it justly belonged to another. I told Byam all about it, so that he understands the whole matter."

"Do you know the whereabouts of George Hilliard?"

"No, I do not. It is said that even his

family have known nothing of him since the night he was released from custody. He was at home about an hour, and then left the house dressed in his plainest suit."

"The family seem to have dropped out of sight too."

"I presume they have no wish to be seen by their old friends. They must be very poor. Hilliard is a broken-down old man. His son's conduct must have been a terrible trial, and I think, too, that he must be troubled about Brenner."

"He ought to be troubled about Brenner. It was a clear case of dishonesty on his part. And liquor was at the bottom of it all. Hilliard always had wine on his sideboard, and George learned to drink it at home. I suppose he can drink moderately all his life, but George could not."

"I am not sure that he can. I have heard it whispered that since his failure he is drinking heavily; and as he cannot afford wine, he takes cheaper drinks. I am afraid he is going down pretty fast."

"When you come to think it all over, it is strange how much of the trouble and poverty in this world is caused by alcoholic liquors. I used to talk for liberty and moderation, but I have changed my opinions on the temperance

question. There is one safe course for everybody, and that is to abstain entirely from the use of all intoxicating drinks."

"Do you class beer among such drinks?"

"I do, and to my mind it is one of the worst. I know a man may drink a great deal of beer without being drunk; but when he is drunk on beer he is terribly drunk. You see I don't choose to use smooth words to describe a man's condition when he is under the influence of intoxicants.

"My attention was called to the effects of beer by an article in *The Scientific Monthly*, and in that article the statement is made that 'beer-drinking produces the very lowest type of inebriety,' and also that 'the most dangerous class of ruffians in our large cities are beer-drinkers.'"

"If that is true, we have as much to fear from breweries as distilleries."

"I think we have more. I have been looking around since I read that, and I believe it is true."

"Stafford, senior, has made his money in beer."

"I suppose there is no doubt of that. He has an interest in several breweries in the Western and Middle States, and now he is making a push for New England."

"Why should he wish to do that? There is great opposition to the business."

"Yes; but it is something gained politically for the rum power to be able to establish a brewery in the face of this opposition. It will have an influence, and may sometime control a local election. All this counts; and they who are working for the liquor interest are not above counting the smallest gains."

"You say Clyde Stafford is to manage the new brewery?"

"He has a deed of the land on which it is to be built, and everything connected with it will be in his name."

"Will he keep as cool a head as his father?"

"That remains to be seen. He is much more of a gentleman than his father. He has agreeable manners when he wishes to produce a good impression. I suppose, too, he would be called handsome, if the expression of his face was not taken into account."

"I hope he won't get the Brenner place."

"I don't believe he will. There will be some way of saving it. There are some things even brewers will not be allowed to do, although we sometimes seem to be at the mercy of the liquor interest. We hardly know the power this interest exercises; and it is solely to put money in the pockets of comparatively few men. It

has no regard whatever to the general prosperity of the country, or even of any given community."

"Is any one really benefited by the manufacture and sale of alcoholic liquor?"

"Money is made by it, and the Government gains a revenue from it."

"That is true; but if money is made by the manufacturers and sellers it is lost by the consumers; and what the Government gains in revenue is small compensation for the crime and poverty entailed upon the nation by the drinking habits of the people.

"Alcoholic drinks are not by any means among the necessities of life, and there are millions of men in our country who cannot afford to spend a single dollar for what is not absolutely necessary to the well-being of themselves or their families. Their income, economically spent, will barely suffice to meet the just demands upon it. An expenditure of even so little as ten or fifteen cents a day outside of these demands, involves positive suffering on the part of the family; and I judge that few beer-drinkers drink less than two or three glasses a day."

"Most would exceed that; many double it, and not a few drink an even dozen. Considering its importance, the economic side of this great question has received little attention. A

man who says he is too poor to educate his children, and at the same time uses either liquor or tobacco, is guilty of telling an absolute falsehood. Thousands of men are dooming their children to ignorance, that they may gratify a besotted taste and indulge in low revels; and it is time that this fact was understood and appreciated."

"It is more than time. Young Byam has shown us what a man can do with two hands, pluck, energy, and perseverance; but who believes he could have done what he has if he had not been a teetotaler? Not every teetotaler could do as much, because, as people say, they are not made for it; but every man with average health can earn a comfortable support for a family, if what he earns is judiciously spent."

"I hope that is true; for how families are to be supported and educated on small means is one of the problems of the age."

"A problem which would be quickly solved, if money was only spent for what gives a fair equivalent."

CHAPTER XVI.

A STRANGE MEETING.

THE clocks were striking ten as Thaddeus Byam was returning home from an evening spent with some gentlemen interested in his invention.

The night was dark; a heavy mist settling down upon the city, rendering everything damp and disagreeable. The street-lamps burned dimly, but he did not heed the gloom, so absorbed was he in his own thoughts. Presently, however, his attention was arrested by the words spoken not far away :

"Oh, father, do try and get up! What can we do?" and then there was a low, despairing cry, as if words had utterly failed.

As he sprang forward to offer assistance, he saw a man, who had evidently fallen upon the sidewalk, with two young girls standing beside him, vainly endeavoring to raise him to his feet.

"Allow me to help you," he said cordially.

"If you only will, we shall be so thankful," was replied. "We must get father home before a policeman sees him."

Thaddeus Byam did not need to ask if the father had been taken suddenly ill. He comprehended the situation at once, and with some words of encouragement assisted the man to his feet.

"Thank you a thousand times. I think we can manage now," said one of the young ladies.

"It will be better that I should go with you," was responded quietly. "If you will lead the way, I think I can answer for the rest. Another fall might injure your father seriously."

It was evident that the daughters wished to avoid further notice, yet circumstances compelled them to accept the assistance so kindly offered. They had gone but a few squares, when they stopped before a small cottage standing a little back from the street, and again wished to dismiss their newly-found friend.

"We thank you for your kindness, and we will not trouble you further."

Yet even as this was said, the father would have fallen had not a strong arm sustained him.

"I cannot leave you until I see you safely in your home. I am quite sure I am needed, and I could not forgive myself for leaving you here," replied Thaddeus Byam.

"What will mother say?" exclaimed one. "We cannot manage father alone, and I am afraid it will kill her to have a stranger come

into the house in this way. But father is growing worse, and——”

The door of the cottage was opened, revealing the figure of a woman.

“Poor mother! It is so hard for her. If you have a mother, don’t ever do anything to make her unhappy,” added the same voice.

“I have neither father nor mother, but I have a dear old grandmother, who has done everything for me, and whom I hope to make very happy as long as she lives,” was replied.

“Oh! my husband; has it come to this?” cried the half-distracted wife, as she stood aside to make room for him to be taken through the narrow hall into a small parlor. “My cup was full, and now it overflows. The worst has come to me.”

“Mother, this gentleman deserves your thanks,” said one of the daughters. “He saw that we needed help, and came to our assistance. But for him it would have been worse for us all.”

Help was still needed. Rousing a little from his stupor, the intoxicated man was ready to assail whoever and whatever came in his way. He asserted his independence and his determination to do as he pleased.

“My name is Hilliard, and everybody knows that Hilliard means what he says,” he shouted

hoarsely. "What are you staring at me so for? Get out of my way. I want a clear track, and I am going to have it. If you get in my way I shall run you down."

His ravings were frightful. His wife and daughters clung to each other in abject terror.

"Mrs. Hilliard, I think I can quiet your husband, if you will leave him alone with me," said Thaddeus Byam; and receiving no answer, he asked: "Am I right in addressing you as Mrs. Hilliard?"

"You are right. I am Mrs. Hilliard. I once was proud of the name, but it has been disgraced; terribly disgraced; forever disgraced."

"You have a right to know my name. I am Thaddeus Byam."

"Thaddeus Byam, the inventor?"

"Yes, madam."

"Then I know we can trust you. We are out of the world, but we have heard of you. I am not afraid to leave my husband with you, but you will put us under such obligations, that we can never repay you."

"I am glad to be of service to you, Mrs. Hilliard. A cup of strong coffee might benefit your husband, and I think I could persuade him to drink it."

"There is no coffee in the house; neither have we money to buy any."

This was said by the younger daughter, whose frankness was proverbial, and who, when reproved for her plain speaking, insisted that it was best to know the whole truth, in order to act intelligently.

Here was poverty, and this was the man so deeply in debt to Luke Brenner, and who, as his companion had been told, most deeply regretted the misfortunes he had brought upon his friend. Even in his ravings he talked of this; saying over and over again:

"Luke Brenner deserved better of me."

"Luke Brenner deserves well of the whole world," at length responded young Byam, curious to know if he could thus arrest the attention of the raving man.

There was no sign of this; but those who listened in an adjoining room heard the name, and looked from one to another questioningly.

"I think I have heard that Byam, the inventor, is a native of the town in which Mr. Brenner lives," said Mrs. Hilliard.

"Then he knows all about it."

"I suppose he must."

"And I want to know about the Brenners."

"What good will it do?" asked the elder sister. "We cannot help them, and I know more about the wretched business now than I wish I did."

"That may be your way, Mollie, but how am I to help unless I understand it thoroughly?"

"Help, child? What can you do?"

"I don't know, mother. I thought I couldn't do anything, but I am not going to sit down and starve, without trying for something better. To begin with, just as soon as father is really sober I am going to talk to him and tell him what I think. It cannot be but what something can reach him. I know when the trouble began."

"When?"

"When wine was first put into the cellar by father's orders, to be brought on the table and left standing on the sideboard. George learned to drink wine at home, and it is a mercy we girls are not drunkards. I would rather die than marry a man who ever tastes of wine."

"Grace, dear, you are becoming excited."

"It is time to become excited, mother; and time, too, to call things by their right names. Nothing else can be so bad as going to a low saloon for father and find him so drunk that he could not stand. After that I think I can bear anything. I am growing desperate."

"Grace, Grace! have you no mercy on mother?"

"Certainly I have. I love mother as well as you do. I could sit down and cry until morn-

ing. I wish I dared to do it, but that would help nobody. As soon as father is quiet I shall ask Mr. Byam to come into this room where I can talk with him."

"How will that help us?"

"I don't know."

"You forget that he is a stranger," said Mrs. Hilliard, looking at her young daughter with wondering admiration.

"I know he is a stranger, but I am sure he is to be trusted, and I think he can tell me what I wish to know about the Brenners. It will be dreadful if they are obliged to give up their home. I have heard that it is a grand old place, and Tamson is such a lovely girl. Mrs. Brenner is so beautiful, too. How can one like her bear poverty, and all because her husband was so kind, and thought others as honorable as himself.

"They must hate us all. If I was a man I would earn the money and pay Mr. Brenner every dollar that is his due. I hope they are not as poor as we are."

"Hush, Grace. How can you talk so? Mother is not to blame. Have you no thought for her?"

"I have all thought for her, and for the Brenners too. I am going to work for them all."

"Grace, my child, you don't realize what you

are saying. How can you ever earn so much money? It is a small fortune in itself."

"And all gone for worse than nothing. It is dreadful to think how we are, and know it is just the abominable drink that has done it."

Again the elder sister attempted to stay this torrent of words, but Grace Hilliard had been thinking in silence, until now, when it all seemed clear to her, she would not be repressed. She was quite determined to ask Mr. Byam in regard to the Brenners, in order, as she said, that she might know what was best to do.

While this was under consideration there was a rap on the kitchen door, followed by the lifting of the latch, as if the person seeking admission was impatient of a moment's delay; but the door was locked. Again an attempt was made to open it from without, and at the same instant a husky voice was heard.

"Let me in. If you have any mercy, let me in. I am starving."

"It is George," said Grace, and hastened to open the door.

He was only fairly within the room when he fell heavily to the floor; at sight of which Mrs. Hilliard shrieked and fainted.

As Mr. Hilliard was now in a condition to be left with safety, Thaddeus Byam came to the rescue, and by well-directed efforts succeeded in

reviving George Hilliard, who feebly begged for food.

"Is he drunk?" asked his sister.

"No; I think he is nearly starved."

"And we have so little to give him. We have sold almost everything that would bring us any money, and we have only tea and crackers in the house. We never were so poor before."

"Crackers and tea is all he should have at present. He must be fed carefully."

"Mother! where is my mother?" whispered the son, who was still lying on the floor, with his head supported by a cushion.

"Mother is here," was replied, as soon as she could speak. "I am here; but oh, my son, my son, that I should have lived to see this night. Your father brought home too intoxicated to be able to walk, and now you——"

"Mother, believe me, for I am speaking the truth. I have not tasted liquor of any kind for a month, and I will die before another drop shall pass my lips. It is two days since I have tasted food, and ten times that since I have had a square meal. Give me something to eat and I will tell you all about it. I am starving."

Food was given him; at first sparingly, and afterward in larger quantities, until nothing remained for the family; while both he and they

needed something more substantial than tea and crackers.

Grace Hilliard found the opportunity she desired to ask in regard to the Brenners, and when told of Stafford's claim upon their home, she said:

"I will tell father and George of that. That will influence them if anything will, and that mortgage shall be paid if I beg the money."

In the early morning, soon after Thaddeus Byam had left the cottage in which he had spent the strangest night of his life, a market-basket containing an ample supply of food for the day was brought to the door; the bearer saying it had been paid for. When the contents were examined, Mrs. Hilliard said, with tears streaming down her cheeks:

"I would rather die than live upon charity."

George and Grace said:

"We will live upon charity and be thankful for it until we have proved ourselves worthy of the charity."

CHAPTER XVII.

UNDER THE LINDENS.

"THE old bench is as strong as ever; good for twenty years more of service," said Luke Brenner, as he seated himself and looked off upon the fair landscape.

He was quite unlike the man who had passed that way in the early spring-time, disheartened and discouraged. He was older by some months, but these months had been so full of work and its compensation that the wheels of time seemed to have rolled backward rather than forward.

Everything had prospered in his hands, and he had many plans for the future. His wife's energy and ability were a constant surprise to him. If, for a moment, he was disposed to look on the dark side, she would insist that all was light; and although no provision had yet been made for redeeming the place, she was so sure this would be accomplished, he had come to share in her faith.

Tamson and Ann, with Mrs. Turner and Dolf, allowed nothing from dairy, poultry yard, or

garden to go to waste. There was a market for all which could be produced; the demand far exceeding the supply. Honey from the Brenner place brought the highest price; and never had bees worked more industriously for the benefit of their owners.

Every week-day morning Ann and Dolf started early for the large hotel with the old farm wagon, in which was neatly packed whatever could be spared that would bring a return in money. The amount was sometimes small; but whatever it was, so much was set down to the credit of the farm.

With his gaze still resting upon the surrounding landscape, Mr. Brenner was thinking of all this, thankful for the good which had come to him. So absorbed was he that he did not notice the approach of a young man until he was addressed by name. He looked up and responded:

“George Hilliard!”

“Yes, Mr. Brenner, I am George Hilliard. It is impossible that you should bid me welcome, but I have walked a hundred miles to ask you to forgive my father and myself, and to tell you that we have devoted our lives to paying as much of our debt to you as is possible for us.”

This was said hurriedly, the last words being

scarcely audible. What their utterance had cost the speaker could be plainly seen. He did not raise his eyes or offer his hand.

Nothing could have more astonished Mr. Brenner; but rising to his feet and taking the young man's hand, he said cordially:

"I trust God will forgive all my sins against Him. Why should I refuse forgiveness to those who have sinned against me? George Hilliard, I freely forgive both your father and yourself."

"A thousand thanks, Mr. Brenner. It is more than I had a right to expect; but I knew you were a Christian, and Grace said real Christians will forgive their enemies. I am the greater sinner. Father wronged you to save me from the punishment I deserved. We have both been down into the depths; but with your forgiveness, I believe we can do something towards redeeming our lives."

"God helping you, you can, and no one will rejoice at your prosperity more heartily than I shall. Your father is one of my oldest friends. We did not always think alike, but there was no break in our friendship. I thought he was wrong on the temperance question. He believed in the moderate use of wine and other alcoholic stimulants, while I believed in total abstinence of the strictest sort."

“There was where father made a fatal mistake. Mr. Brenner, I was ruined by wine-drinking, and so was my father. I learned to drink wine at home with my father. I cannot tell you how low his appetite dragged him; but I have tramped the country, hiding by day and walking by night; half starved for the want of food, and half crazed by my longing for drink I had no means of obtaining.

“The craving for the old stimulants has not left me; but whatever comes, I am pledged never to taste the cursed stuff again. That is my only hope. Father is pledged too, and when I tell you what he is doing, you will believe that he is in earnest. He is selling wood prepared for the stove to poor people who can buy only in small quantities. At first he bought only a cord, which between us we managed to saw and split, and when that was sold he bought two cords. There is land enough belonging to the cottage he has rented to furnish storage for the wood, and he makes a small profit on its sale. It is humble business, but it is honest.”

“It may be humble, but it is not humiliating. Whatever is honest should be considered honorable; and if your father prospers, there is no reason why he cannot enlarge his business. I am glad to hear from him, and more glad than

I can tell you, to know that he is at last a teetotaler. You say you walked a hundred miles to reach here?"

"Yes, sir; I could not afford to ride. I started with only a dollar in my pocket and a pair of stout shoes on my feet. My shoes are a good deal worse for wear, but I have ninety cents of the dollar left. Whatever else I could take with me in the way of clothing and toilet necessities I brought in my knapsack, which has served a double purpose. It has been a pillow for my head."

"And you have spent but ten cents?"

"Only ten, Mr. Brenner, but I have not begged."

"A young man with health and strength does not need to beg. He has the world before him from which to choose."

"The world was all before me, but with my own hand I closed the doors leading to honorable employment, and I must now take a low place; but whatever I do, I will do it as well as I can. I wish to go into a lumber camp somewhere in the wilds."

"You would find the work hard and the company rough in a lumber camp."

"Hard work is what I need; and as for company, the exterior may be rougher, but the real men themselves cannot be less refined than

many with whom I have associated, and who counted themselves gentlemen."

"I presume that is true. But what will you do before the lumber season opens?"

"Whatever I can find to do. I am working my way north. If I could live over the last ten years of my life I would gladly do so; but as I cannot do that, I am bound to make the most of what remains to me. All my regrets will avail nothing."

"Regrets are useless, except as they lead us to act more wisely in future."

George Hilliard made no reply to this, and there was a short silence, when, as if thinking aloud, he said:

"And Stafford holds a mortgage on this place?"

"He does," replied Mr. Brenner.

"He shall not have it. My sister Grace says she will beg the money to redeem it, before Clyde Stafford shall ever own it. It must be a valuable estate."

"It is. I have allowed it to deteriorate in value, but this year we are improving on that."

"You must have some valuable timber, if that stretch of woodland belongs to you."

"It does, and those who can judge of its value better than I, say the timber would nearly pay the face of the mortgage. Of course there is

interest overdue, but we could pay that if we could manage to take the mortgage out of Stafford's hands."

"Are you willing I should look the timber over?"

"Certainly; I should be glad to have you do so, and I will accompany you."

George Hilliard's father had at one time been a large lumber-dealer, and when a boy, George Hilliard had found great pleasure in examining the different varieties of wood and learning their uses. He had prided himself upon the knowledge thus acquired; and now, as he was seeking an occupation which would enable him to make a fresh start in life, it was not strange that he should have chosen that of lumbering.

Mr. Brenner, knowing something of his early tastes, was not sorry to have his judgment in regard to the market value of the grand old trees he had so long counted as his own.

"Such oaks!" exclaimed the young man. "There is almost a fortune in them, to say nothing of anything else. They add greatly to the beauty of the landscape, but you can afford to spare them. Thaddeus Byam told me about them, and he said oak timber was selling higher now than ever before."

"Then you know Thaddeus Byam," remarked Mr. Brenner.

For answer to this his companion told him of the circumstances under which they had met, adding:

"It was he who proposed father's selling wood, and when I told him I intended to see you, he said it was the right thing to do. Grace thought so too. She wished she could come with me, but she is needed at home. And besides, we had no money for car fare."

After this there was much to be said; with many questions to be asked and answered; the time passing rapidly, until the sun was sinking toward the west.

"You will be my guest for the night," then said Mr. Brenner, as they came again to the old bench under the lindens.

"Thank you, but I cannot accept your hospitality," was replied. "I am not dressed to meet company, and I must prove myself worthy to come under your roof before I presume to do so. I am very grateful for your kindness. It is more than I deserve; but if you would remember me in your prayers it might help me sometimes when I am sorely tempted."

"You shall have my prayers and my best wishes; and may God bless you with the choicest of His blessings."

The two men clasped hands for a moment;

then, turning away, George Hilliard was soon lost to the sight of his friend.

An hour later he called at a lonely farmhouse and asked for a bowl of bread and milk; and as fortune would have it, found, at the same time, an opportunity to render the farmer an important service, in return for which a more substantial supper was set before him. Then he moved on; walking some distance before lying down to sleep in an empty barn.

The next morning he wrote a letter to his sister Grace, which he placed in a directed envelope, carried in his pocket-book with several others, for this very purpose. This he left at the next post-office, and afterward made a long journey before another night.

At the end of this day's journey he rested and looked about for employment, which was readily found. He was unused to work, as any one could see, but he was quick to learn and faithful to perform, so that he soon made friends.

CHAPTER XVIII.

GRACE HILLIARD.

"MR. FOWLER, a lady to see you."

The counting-room door was opened wider; a young lady passed in, and the door was closed.

"Miss Grace! Good-morning," said an elderly gentleman, turning from his desk and extending his hand. "Please be seated. I prefer sitting to standing, and so probably will you when you are as old as I am."

"Thank you, Mr. Fowler. I am not sure but I ought to apologize for intruding upon you this morning, but I had a favor to ask," replied his visitor.

"I am not in the habit of having young ladies ask favors of me, and I should be very sorry to refuse you."

"But I have come to ask a favor for another."

"And who may the other be?"

"Mr. Luke Brenner. There is a mortgage on his country seat. Clyde Stafford bought the mortgage and has foreclosed on it. The place is worth twice the amount of the mortgage, and

if Mr. Brenner could have time he could pay it easily."

"And you came to ask me to advance the money to pay it?"

"If you only would, Mr. Fowler. I can't tell you all about it, but Mr. Thaddeus Byam can. His home is in the same town as Mr. Brenner's, and he knows all about the mortgage."

"Is he the Byam who has invented such a wonderful piece of machinery?"

"Yes, sir."

"I have heard of him as a man to be trusted. And you say Clyde Stafford holds the mortgage?"

"Yes, sir; he bought it of the heirs of the original holder before Mr. Brenner knew he had any idea of doing it. He offered himself to Tamson Brenner, and she refused him, and I suppose now he wishes to punish her by turning the family out of their home."

"Better he turned into the street than marry him. Don't you think so, Miss Grace?"

"Yes, sir. My brother has done very badly, but I don't think he is much worse at heart than Clyde Stafford. Clyde Stafford could keep a cool head, when George would be crazy drunk."

"Clyde Stafford calls himself a man of the world, and such men are not troubled with many conscientious scruples. I am thankful

Tamson Brenner did not throw herself away on him. She was a bright, pretty girl, and Herbert Brenner was as promising a lad as I ever saw. I used to almost envy his father when I saw them together. His death was a terrible blow to the family. If he had lived he would have been a tower of strength in his home."

"Tamson is the tower of strength now. If it had not been for her, her father would have given up everything without making an effort to save his place. She is working as hard as their one servant, and shows a wonderful aptitude for business."

"She is a brave girl. It would be a pity to have them lose their home."

"It would be dreadful, Mr. Fowler. I would be willing to work hard for ten years if I could save the place for them. George has seen Mr. Brenner. He said that before he started out in his new life he must see the man he and father had wronged so wickedly. He walked there."

"How far?"

"More than a hundred miles."

"And George Hilliard walked that distance?"

"Yes, sir; he was obliged to walk or not go there. He hadn't money to pay his car fare. He started from home with only a dollar, and when he got to Mr. Brenner's place he had

ninety cents left. After he saw Mr. Brenner and talked with him, he said he felt so light and happy he could work or walk without being tired. May I read you the letter he wrote home?"

"You may read or say anything to me you please, Miss Grace."

The letter was read; after which Mr. Fowler said:

"If that is true, the place must be saved."

"Mr. Byam says it is true."

"I wish you would ask Mr. Byam to call on me."

"Thank you, Mr. Fowler. I know he will be glad to come. It doesn't seem possible that I can ever do you a favor; but if I ever can, I shall be most happy."

"Nobody knows what may happen, Miss Grace. I am not as young as I was once, and my eyes don't serve me as they did. If my daughters had lived our house would be less lonely. Your father can never be really poor so long as he has you. Money is not the best thing in the world."

"No, Mr. Fowler, but the want of it is very inconvenient."

"So it is, Miss Grace; so it is. I shall not forget your visit, and I shall be ready to talk with Mr. Byam at any time."

"Thank you, Mr. Fowler; you are very kind. I hope you don't think it was very improper for me to come here this morning?"

"Not at all, Miss Grace; not at all."

"Then I am glad I came. Good-morning."

"Good-morning, Miss Grace."

The next day Thaddeus Byam called upon Mr. Fowler and corroborated every statement made by George Hilliard in regard to the value of the Brenner place. He knew the exact amount of the mortgage, with the circumstances under which it had been given.

"There would be no risk in advancing the money," he said at length. "Once let Mr. Brenner feel at liberty to develop the resources of his estate, and the debt would soon be paid. I could contract for every foot of oak timber within a week; and at such prices, too, as would leave a large margin of profit."

"Would Stafford transfer the mortgage?"

"No, sir; we must have the money outright. He wants the place for two reasons. To be its owner would gratify his revenge; and then it is the finest country seat in the vicinity. The whole family are doing their best to save it, but they must have help. I think they can pay the interest now due, with something on the principal before the year closes. They certainly can if allowed to cut the lumber. If there was any

prospect of my being able to raise the money I should see Mr. Brenner, and know just what might be expected from them. My invention is considered valuable, and I would give you or any other honorable man a claim upon the sales, to be redeemed by me at any time within five years."

"In that case you would be the one to help Mr. Brenner out of his difficulties."

"I would be willing to make a sacrifice to do that. He gave me advice that changed my whole life. He was my friend when I needed friends. It is a good deal for such a man as he was, fifteen years ago, to take a poor boy by the hand and tell him what there is for him in the world if he will only do his best."

"I judge that you have done your best, Mr. Byam."

"I have tried."

"Come to me in a week and I will tell you my decision."

The decision made it possible to save the Brenner estate to its rightful owner. The amount of the mortgage was to be placed in the hands of Thaddeus Byam, he giving security for the same; the conditions being so explicitly stated, there could be no misunderstanding. The money was to be repaid in installments, at such times as were specified.

Mr. Hilliard could not have been more rejoiced had a fortune fallen to him; and from that time he laid aside, each day, some part of his small profits, to be applied to the reduction of this debt.

"If I was only situated so I could sell lumber for Luke Brenner, I could do a good thing for myself and him too; but he would be a fool to consign it to me."

"Why would he?" asked Grace.

"Because any man is a fool to trust another who has once deceived him. It is too much to expect. I must keep on selling wood and coal as the season advances. It is poor business, but it is honest, and it keeps us from starving. I am getting used to the work, too, so it is not so hard for me."

"If you could have a lumber-yard, father, I would stay in the office and do all the writing, so you could have your time outside," responded Grace. "Since George's last letter I feel as though I could do any amount of hard work."

"You would make a good saleswoman," rejoined Mollie. "I watched you when you were measuring the wood for that old lady and the two boys. They will be sure to tell their neighbors about the young lady who waited upon them and asked them to sit down and rest."

"The old lady looked so tired I couldn't help

asking her to sit down and rest, and I am sure it did her good to tell me some of her troubles. She said she had been cheated in buying wood because she could only buy a little at a time. I didn't cheat her a stick, 'though I made a fair profit on what I sold her."

"What if some of your old friends had seen you selling wood?"

"It would not have troubled me. I am no longer a society girl; and if society cares no more for me, why should I care for society? Father is saved, George is saved, and Mr. Brenner is not to lose his place. I keep repeating over these blessed facts till I quite forget everything unpleasant. So long as we are all alive, and all doing as well as we can, nothing can make me very unhappy. I should be a little happier if I was earning something every day, but that will come in good time. I am practicing for it."

"Is that what you are doing in your room so many hours every day?"

"Yes, it is; and when I feel myself qualified I shall apply for a position as book-keeper, unless father has work for me."

Meanwhile George Hilliard had engaged himself to a large farmer for three months, to do whatever should be required of him. At the end of that time he would join a company of

men to go into camp for the winter in a northern forest.

It required the utmost effort of his will to follow the course he had marked out for himself; but every letter from home inspired him with fresh courage and made it possible for him to persevere.

He made no acquaintances beyond those immediately around him. He was accounted unsocial; more than one saying there was some mystery about him; yet all trusted him and treated him with kindness.

Even in his seclusion he heard of Clyde Stafford's plans for money-making, and listened to not infrequent discussions in regard to the effect of beer upon the health and morals of a community.

"What do you think about it, Hilliard?" asked an elderly man.

"I think it is a curse, morally and physically," was replied.

"But some folks say if a man drinks beer he'll be satisfied not to drink anything stronger; and some say, too, that everybody wants a stimulant of some kind. In my young days I used to drink cider, and never thought there was anything wrong about it; but lately I've made up my mind it ain't the best kind of drink. I don't know as it ever hurt me, but I

don't want my grandchildren to drink it. I want them to be strict teetotalers. Then they'll be safe."

"And that is the only safety. If cider is bad, beer is worse, and all this talk about its being a temperance drink is a tissue of falsehoods. What should you think of a man who would drink five, ten, or even fifteen glasses of beer a day, for which he paid five cents a glass?"

"I should think he was a fool to spend his money so."

"But some men will drink twenty glasses a day, and I have heard of a man drinking thirty."

CHAPTER XIX.

TWO DAYS.

"THAD BYAM?"

"Yes, Mrs. Hill; here I am at your service. I thought I should surprise you, as I did grandmother. She did not know I was coming; and now that I am here, I can only stop two days. I came on the night train, and must hurry through my business as fast as possible. I hope Mr. Hill is at home. I was obliged to start early this morning, and hoped to be here before he would go away."

"He is going soon; but there he comes, and he will be glad to see you."

Greetings were exchanged, and then the purpose of the visit was explained. Thad Byam had made arrangements to furnish Mr. Brenner with whatever money was required to release him from all obligations to Clyde Stafford.

"I intended to be sure of enough," said the young man.

"You won't need anything more than the bare face of the mortgage," was replied. "I can spare a hundred or two dollars toward the in-

terest, and Cousin Luke's wife has saved quite a sum. So I think we can manage the interest, and it is best for Cousin Luke to feel that he has something to do in the matter, and forced to do his level best. He is gaining every day, and getting to have something of his old influence in town. There are not many in town, either, but are glad of it. Tamson was never so well liked as she is now; and as for her mother, people are just getting acquainted with her. But this is not business."

During the next half hour calculations were made and plans matured, until everything was plain before them.

"I have not told you, but Richard Anslow came up here last week and told me he was ready to advance every dollar Luke Brenner might need to free him from all embarrassment. The question now is, shall he do it or shall you?"

"I always thought Mr. Anslow had money somewhere," responded Thad Byam to this announcement, without giving a thought to the question to be considered. "He is a grand man, and his sister is a grand woman."

"I believe you are right, although I have seldom seen them. They never seemed to care for the people around here, so Prudence and I have not tried to get acquainted with them. But

what do you say, Thad, shall it be you or Mr. Anslow?"

"I cannot answer that until I have seen Mr. Anslow. In either case, security must be considered."

"Mr. Anslow said he wanted no security. A note of hand is all he wants, and he says if the money is never returned no one will suffer on account of it. I told him there was no doubt of its being paid."

"Not a particle of doubt, Mr. Hill. I have planned for that from the resources of the place. Mr. Brenner can do it without injury to his estate."

"I wish you could talk with Tamson. She has a clear head for business, and she knows to a dollar the amount of their indebtedness, and what they can pay."

"I am not acquainted with her, and, of course, I could not intrude myself upon her."

"She would not consider it an intrusion. We have been expecting her up here to spend a day with us, and I wish she would come to-day."

"I wish she would, but such things happen only in stories," was replied.

Everything being settled, so far as this could be done by Jacob Hill and Thad Byam, the latter was about to take his departure, when Mrs. Hill exclaimed :

"There is Tamson, this minute. I have been on the lookout for her all the morning. I knew this was one of her most leisure days."

Cordially welcomed, she did not know of Thad Byam's presence until he was introduced to her as the young man who had come from the city for the express purpose of helping her father out of Stafford's clutches.

It was Prudence Hill's way of plunging into the middle of things at once; because, as she said, "it makes it easier all 'round, and everybody knows just what to expect."

"He is very kind," answered Tamson Brenner, and was considering what more she would say, when the young man began an explanation, to which she listened with surprise and delight, although her eyes were wet with unshed tears.

"And you would embarrass yourself to save my father," she said, as he paused for a moment.

"It would not embarrass me," he replied. "Mr. Fowler is an honorable man, and I am to repay him by installments, which I can easily do. Mr. Hilliard's family are to help in this, too. The evening before I left the city he gave me ten dollars, which he said he could spare for your father."

After this, Thad Byam told Tamson Brenner of the manner of life the Hilliards were lead-

ing, and the efforts Grace was making to fit herself to earn money.

"And Mr. Hilliard saws and splits the wood he sells!"

"He has so far, with a little help from friends who are more used to such work than he is."

"They must need the ten dollars."

"It is better for them to give it than to keep it. Mr. Hilliard is beginning to regain his self-respect. He has told me more than once that he was ashamed to look an honest man in the face. He thought, at first, he would go where no one had ever heard his name; but he says now he is going to live down his shame and disgrace in the city where he is known, and I believe he will do it."

"I certainly hope he will. I am sorry for Mollie and Grace; but hard lessons are often needed, and one never knows what can be done until the trial is made. You must have learned that by experience, Mr. Byam."

"I have, and, thanks to your father, I had courage to make the trial. But for him, I fear I should have done little good work in the world."

Tamson Brenner was able to give just the information desired. She knew how much could be expected from the proceeds of the farm. She knew how many trees, and of what varieties,

could be cut for timber; also the probable cost of preparing it for market. Every dollar received for this would be applied toward payment of the debt for which the place had been mortgaged.

Having learned all this, Thad Byam left Eagle Point, and went to call on Mr. Brenner, whom he found busily at work in the orchard; so intent upon this work, that he was not aware of the young man's presence until addressed by name. He was removing part of the fruit from the trees, that what remained might reach a higher state of perfection.

"As you see, there must be a great deal of pruning and cutting off," he said, after an exchange of the usual courtesies. "One cannot have all and everything in this life. There must be a choice. Sometimes we make the choice for ourselves, and sometimes it is made for us; but always there must be some sacrifice."

"Yes, sir; I have learned that by experience. You helped me to make the choice which has given me whatever success in life I have gained. I am here now to make you what return I can."

Mr. Brenner looked at his visitor questioningly, as if asking an explanation, which was made in as few words as possible.

"And you would do this for me!" exclaimed

the old man, uncovering his head and looking reverently upward. "It is too much. I must not allow you to make such a sacrifice."

"It would be no sacrifice for me," was replied.

Until that interview Mr. Brenner had not realized the half of what this young man had a right to expect as the result of his work. When all was told, came the response:

"I am thankful for you; thankful, too, if I was able to speak the right word at the right time."

"That was what you did, Mr. Brenner. I remember it all as well as if it had occurred but yesterday. I did not sleep much the night after you talked with me. You told me you should pray for me, and for the first time in my life I really prayed for myself.

"I had repeated the prayers my grandmother taught me, but I was only a careless, thoughtless boy. The next morning I began to realize that I had some responsibility in life. From that day to this I have hoped the time would come when I could give you some substantial expression of my gratitude."

"The time seems to have come, but the expression is out of all proportion with the obligation, even estimating that at its highest rate."

"It was a life and a soul saved, Mr. Brenner."

There could be no reply to this, except in words

of thankfulness that such results had blessed an humble effort made in the Master's name.

The two men walked out of the garden into the library, where papers were produced and estimates made, corresponding with those previously made by Tamson Brenner.

"I have been all over this many times, and I had about made up my mind to go to the city and see if I could get help from some of my old friends; but you would save me from the necessity of that," said Mr. Brenner in a husky voice.

"And the Hilliards. They have done nobly. I wouldn't have believed it was in George, to start off on a hundred-mile tramp, and work for what food he had."

"I expect he was used to tramping. After his father had settled for his forgeries, he wandered off, no one knew where; and he told me he hardly knew himself. He worked some and begged some; always drinking liquor when he could get it.

"He slept in all sorts of places, with all sorts of companions; keeping mainly to large towns. He was in the city two months before he went to his father's, starving; and it was the sight of him that made his father realize how low they had both fallen. That night they signed a pledge of total abstinence, and I believe they have kept it."

CHAPTER XX.

A TEMPERANCE MEETING.

THERE was only time for people to wonder why Thad Byam had come home again so soon, before he was gone. Their astonishment was greatly increased when he appeared upon the village street in less than a week from the time he had left.

During his first visit he had seen Mr. Anslow, when all arrangements were made for the payment of Mr. Brenner's debt. It was thought best, however, to consult Mr. Fowler, which was done; and although he was ready to advance the money, he was also ready to accede to the new proposal.

The loan was made to Thaddeus Byam, who transferred it at once to Mr. Brenner, accepting no security, and expressing the utmost pleasure in being able thus to make some return for past kindness.

Before the evening of the day in which all claim upon the Brenner place passed forever from the hands of Clyde Stafford, the town rang with the news.

"Thank God," said many a man and woman

to whom a helping hand had been extended when they were in trouble. Thad Byam was the hero of the hour; people passing around him for the privilege of speaking to him.

"I never expected to see such a day as this," said an old man, who was leaning upon his cane. "I remember Thad when his grandma'am took him to bring up. I remember, too, how hard she worked to do it. It seemed to me, a good many times, as though she was throwing away her time and strength, but he has paid her for it all.

"May God bless him and make His face to shine upon him. May God give him riches, and long life in which to serve his fellow-men."

"Amen," was responded heartily, and then as Thad Byam caught a glimpse of the old man, he sprang forward, saying cordially:

"I am glad to see you, Gransir Lane. You are carrying your years well. I hope you are made comfortable."

"I hain't anything to complain of, Thad. My children are good to me, and so are my grandchildren. There's one thing, though, that troubles me about the boys. It's the brewery that's building, and the saloon they've got running. So far we've kept our boys out of the saloon; but nobody knows how much longer we can do it.

"Seems as though the devil helped such places along. If the women that profess to be Christians had been as busy as they ought to be, seems as though we needn't had this trouble. They say you've got one of our town boys with you, trying to make a man of him. Tim Durrell is with you, ain't he?"

"Yes, sir, he is, and he is doing well. He is a bright, smart fellow, too."

"I always knew that. You calculate he'll hold out, don't you?"

"Yes, sir; he would rather die than go back. He hasn't had a long trial, but I believe Tim is a Christian."

"Been converted then since he went away from here. You're a Christian, ain't ye, Thad?"

"I hope I am. Anyway, I am trying to do my duty as God would have me."

"And trying to help others."

"That is a part of my duty; a large part, too."

"You ain't ashamed then to say that you love the Lord Jesus Christ."

"Ashamed! Why, Gransir Lane, I think being a Christian is the grandest thing in the world; and to have the Lord Jesus Christ for a friend is the highest honor a man can attain."

"Thank God for letting me live to hear you say that. I wish our boys were all of that

mind. There's going to be a fight over them, and nobody knows which will win in the end."

"In the end the right is sure to win."

"I know that, Thad, but I'm afraid we ain't near enough to the end, so but what the wrong will have some more triumphs. There's a blight come on us."

Those who heard this conversation were strangely impressed by its earnestness and the contrast between the speakers; one having long ago passed the allotted age of man, while the other was in the glory and strength of young manhood.

But there was another clique who professed friendship for Clyde Stafford, and denounced Thad Byam as a meddler. The saloon-keeper was using every art to increase the number of his customers, even offering prizes to those who patronized him most liberally.

"What can be done to counteract the influence of the rum power?" was a question often asked; and on this occasion it was answered by Gransir Lane, who said:

"Let's have a temperance meeting to-morrow evening in the town hall. We hain't had such a meeting lately, and we ought to have one.

"Thad can tell us how he came to start on a new track, when folks were afraid he was going the same way some others did. We want him

to tell us, too, how he come to think of making that machine folks talk so much about. That wouldn't be talking about temperance, but it's got something to do with it. We want to know how he managed to earn and save money enough to do so much.

"There's others that can help fill up the time. Then we want some singing, and I rather guess I can help that along with my bass-viol. I can't sing very well, but I can keep time and tune with my old viol."

After some consideration it was decided to have the temperance meeting. Mr. Brenner consented to preside. The clergymen were persuaded to take seats upon the platform. Tamson Brenner arranged for the singing, taking the lead herself; so there was no danger of failure in the musical entertainment.

As there had been no temperance meeting in town for years, this was regarded as quite an event. Care was taken to advertise the meeting as widely as possible. Dolf Turner was sent in one direction, while a lad who could be trusted was sent in another; each being instructed to ask each one whom they notified to notify others.

As a result the hall was well filled; many coming several miles to see and hear something new. Mrs. Byam was there; so thankful and

happy, she had no words to express her happiness.

After the opening prayer and the singing of a hymn, to which the old bass-viol lent a vigorous accompaniment, Mr. Brenner made a short speech, in which he deplored the poverty and wretchedness caused by the use of intoxicating drinks. He then introduced the speaker of the evening: "Our townsman, Thaddeus Byam."

It was a new position for the young man, and at first his words came slowly; but as he looked into the faces before him, he soon forgot all else, in his desire to say what might have an influence for good.

He went back to his boyhood, when, careless of the future, he had welcomed any excitement which promised an hour of fun or frolic. He told of the warning he had received; the counsel which had been given him, and lastly of the long, sleepless night when the decision had been made to which he attributed whatever of success he had achieved. He then told of his work in the humble garret; the time snatched from sleep; his frugal fare and constant self-denials, that he might accomplish what he had set himself to do.

Passing rapidly over these personal reminiscences, he spoke upon the great question of temperance or total abstinence. He cited numer-

ous instances, some of which had come under his own observation, where young men with every advantage of education, influential friends, and abundant means, had sunk into infamy and poverty because of their drinking habits.

In this connection he spoke of beer-drinking, claiming that it was evil and only evil; the expense of the habit being a waste no man could afford. He read from statistics gathered by men who would make no mistake in their estimates, showing the large amount of beer manufactured, and the enormous profits from its manufacture and sale.

“Brewers become enormously rich, while beer-drinkers grow poorer every day, by the amount they pay for beer. A confirmed beer-drinker, taking no more than the average amount daily, will spend enough to pay for a comfortable home.

“In ten years he will waste time enough over his beer, which if spent over good books would make him an intelligent man. He will poison his blood, and in every way make himself a coarser, more disagreeable man. I will say nothing of the appetite for stronger alcoholic drinks, almost sure to be created by the use of beer.”

There was a perceptible stir throughout the audience when beer was mentioned. There were many present who had voted for the brewery, and whose fields of barley were ripening for the

harvest. There were boys who had listened to specious arguments in favor of beer, and who already knew its taste; yet so implicitly did they believe in Thad Byam, they were ready to accept whatever he said as true. They nodded to each other significantly, following him in his calculations, as he told what luxuries the money now spent for beer and tobacco would give to every man, woman, and child in the country.

At the close of his "talk" he presented a pledge binding all who signed it to abstain from all alcoholic drinks, including beer and cider; and to his surprise, some from whom he had expected decided opposition were among the first to sign this pledge. The number enrolled was much larger than the most sanguine had dared to hope. An attempt to create some disturbance had so signally failed, the promoters were ready to disavow the attempt, and contented themselves with criticisms uttered half under their breath.

"That pledge business was a trap sprung on the folks before they realized what it meant," said one who was careful to assert his independence and his right to do as he pleased.

If this were true, the trap had been so well baited that the victims entered it willingly; and so Thad Byam, the inventor, was pitted against Clyde Stafford, the brewer.

CHAPTER XXI.

IN A LUMBER CAMP.

It had cost George Hilliard a severe struggle to come to a decision to acknowledge his past life to the man from whom he desired employment for the winter; but the decision once reached he did not hesitate.

So soon as he had proved his ability to perform manual labor successfully, his sister Grace urged him to make no further attempt to conceal his identity.

"We must face the world in our new position, and the sooner we do this, the easier it will be," she wrote in one of the letters which came to him regularly each week. "Now that Mr. Brenner's place is safe, I can bear anything. He has written a very kind letter to father, and you can hardly imagine how much that letter has done for us. It has just lifted us up out of our troubles, so that father does twice the work he did before.

"We are selling kindlings now, which adds very materially to our profits. Our business is getting too large for our accommodations. I

have some book-keeping to do, and hope for more.

"Don't go into the woods for the winter until you have made a clean breast of it to the man for whom you wish to work. If he will not employ you after that, try another. Anything is better than living in constant fear of exposure."

Mr. Luscomb employed only picked men who could be relied upon in every emergency; men who were total abstainers from all alcoholic stimulants; who regarded the Sabbath and revered the name of God. So far as possible, he employed Christian men, who, while working hard, were not likely to miss opportunities for mental improvement. Luscomb's camp was a model of comfort and convenience; while the fare was generous and wholesome.

"The best owner, the best foreman, and the best gang of men anywhere in our lumber region," said the farmer for whom George Hiliard had worked through the autumn. "If you can get a chance in that camp you better take it. Likely Luscomb will ask a good many questions he'll expect you to answer fair and square. I took you on trust, and I hain't seen any reason to be sorry; but it's different when you're going in for an all-winter's job. I'll recommend you as far as I know."

"Thank you," replied George Hilliard, and decided at once to see Mr. Luscomb.

The gentleman was at home when he called early one evening, and made known his business.

"I am one man short," was replied.

"Can I supply that lack?" asked George Hilliard. "I have had no experience in lumbering, but I know something of trees and their relative value when converted into lumber."

Having said this, he proceeded to make a plain statement of his case; speaking hurriedly, as if fearful that he might fail of his purpose.

"And you are George Hilliard, who ruined his father, who in turn ruined Luke Brenner."

"I am George Hilliard, who ruined his father, but, thank God, Luke Brenner is not ruined. He will redeem his place, and if God gives me health and strength, I will pay him every dollar that is his due."

"You have a life-work before you, but I am glad to know there is hope for Mr. Brenner. Why did you tell me so much of yourself?"

"Because I wished you to know the truth about me."

"But I might not wish to hire such a man as you confess to have been."

"Yes, sir; I thought of all that. I am very anxious to be employed by you, but I would rather be refused than be accepted without your

knowing my history; although it seems as if my whole life depended upon your answer to me this evening."

"You would not go back to your old ways?"

"No, sir; never. I shall not do that, let come what will. I have learned that I have strength for hard hand-work, and——"

Here the speaker paused, unable to say more.

Mr. Luscomb looked at him for a moment, and then said:

"I am going to trust you. My men will go into the woods a week from next Monday, and you can go with them. I shall go too, and stay perhaps for a fortnight. I always start them off myself. By that time my foreman will know what place you can fill best, and decide what your wages shall be. I suppose you are prepared to rough it?"

"Yes, sir; I think I am quite prepared for that. I thank you for giving me employment, and I will do my best for you. If I fail, it will not be for want of hearty good-will."

"You need not fail. I believe you will not fail."

At last preparations were completed, and the men went to their winter's work, with cattle, horses, and all needed supplies; Mr. Luscomb superintending in person, watching every movement and ordering every detail.

During the fortnight spent in camp he was able to judge of George Hilliard's skill and industry, which more than realized his expectations; and for which he took occasion to commend the young man.

"I hope you will have an eye on Arles," he said, when about to leave. "The boy came to me two months ago and asked for work. He was dressed poorly, and had evidently been poorly fed; and that is all I know about him, except that he has worked enough to pay his board and buy a decent suit of clothes.

"He declines to answer any questions about himself. So far as I know, he neither writes nor receives any letters. Perhaps you can gain his confidence. He is not strong, and I objected to his coming into the woods, but his heart was set on it. He is more likely to be attracted to you than to any other one of the men, and you may be able to do him good."

There was not much to break the monotony of the days, except when a heavy fall of snow interrupted for a little the usual routine. The winter was severe, yet work progressed fairly, with promise of benefit to all. Young Arles was the only one of the company who suffered from positive illness, and then, in his weakness and longing for sympathy, he told George Hilliard his story; such as had been told many a

time before, and will be told many a time again, so long as alcohol shall madden the brain and debase the moral nature.

"I want to see my mother," said the poor fellow. "I would be willing to die, if I could only see my mother. She loves me, but my father cares only for money, and my brother is like him. Oh, mother! mother!"

So he would moan, sobbing out his grief in George Hilliard's arms; left much to himself through the day, but clinging close to his friend at night.

"Just enough money to bring me to America, and then—Oh, mother! mother! I wish I had died. I don't want to go out of the woods. I have nowhere to go, unless you take me with you, and you couldn't do that."

Nothing better could have come to George Hilliard than this dependence of another upon his care and tenderness. The entire discipline of the winter strengthened and developed him in the right direction. He made no secret of his past follies; and the frankness with which these were acknowledged and deplored, so far from creating a prejudice against him, only served to win for him a more sincere friendship. When the spring opened, not a man in camp but trusted and respected him.

He was going home to his parents, but would

first visit Mr. Brenner. Ben Arles was going with him, hoping that somewhere there could be found "a place for a poor boy to be taken in and allowed to work for his board."

"It almost seems to me I might get well, if I could only see my mother," said the young man. "I can never pay you for your kindness; but if you ever see my mother tell her, and she will pay you."

"You will see your mother before I do," replied his friend. "We will find a home for you where you will grow strong and well."

"I am afraid you can't do it. Nobody wants me, and I am not worth much only for loving."

"You are worth being loved, Bennie. There is no one else in the world, outside of my own family, whom I love as I do you."

"Then I will try and live, because sometime I may be able to do you a little kindness, and won't I be glad to do it, and for Mr. Luscomb, too!"

Mr. Luscomb was still mindful of him, and before he left gave him a generous sum of money, although he had done but little work during the winter. Then he started on the journey which proved for him so eventful.

Most unexpectedly, when they reached the town in which Mr. Brenner resided, George Hilliard met Thad Byam, to whom he intro-

duced Ben Arles; who in turn introduced him to Mr. Anslow, who was standing near.

"Arles is an old-country name," said the gentleman.

"And I am an old-country boy," was responded.

"I hope you like the new country?"

"I do, because I have found friends here, and I needed them. I am looking now for more friends who will give me shelter and a chance to do such work as I can."

Mr. Anslow was interested. The two seemed mutually attracted to each other, and withdrawing a little from their companions, engaged in conversation.

"I wish Mr. Anslow would take Bennie home with him," said George Hilliard after a half hour had elapsed and they were still talking earnestly. "His face is that of a man who can be trusted."

"I would trust him for all my life is worth; and his sister, who lives with him, is worthy of such a brother."

"If Bennie only tells him his story he will be sure to pity the boy."

"I take it he is English."

"Yes; he says he is the younger son of an English brewer, who turned him adrift with only money enough to pay his passage to this

country. He was a wild boy, and after being sent away from home he was reckless and desperate. But something made him stop and think; and thinking made him decide to change his manner of life. That is the outline of the story he told me, and I believe he told the truth."

"If he wishes to redeem himself, Mr. Anslow is the very man to help him."

This gentleman had listened to Bennie's story from Bennie's own mouth, and invited the boy home with him to spend a month. After that, if a change seemed desirable, it could be made.

"Now I have to see Mr. Brenner, and then I am off for home," remarked George Hilliard.

"You will find things much changed at your home," replied Thad Byam. "Your father is doing quite a good business, and your sister Grace is a popular saleswoman. The poor people like to buy wood of her."

"Grace has saved the family. Her letters have been an inspiration to me. I should never have pulled through if it hadn't been for them."

CHAPTER XXII.

A PRIVATE INTERVIEW.

"HAVE you seen your paragon of perfection?" asked Clyde Stafford of a young man who was passing him with a careless nod of recognition.

"Paragon of perfection! Who may that be?" was responded.

"Why, Thad Byam. He is back again looking after the interests of the town, I suppose. He seems to have time to attend to everybody's business."

"Without neglecting his own. No one can accuse him of that. He is the smartest man ever raised anywhere 'round here. I only wish the rest of us could do as well as he has."

"Paragon of perfection, with a forger, swindler, and roué for a friend. I never did have so much faith in him; but since I have seen him with George Hilliard I think I know just about how much his pretensions to goodness are worth."

"If you know, please give me the exact value."

Clyde Stafford turned sharply at the sound

of a voice he recognized at once as that of the man whose character he was considering.

"I have never been able to come to any definite estimate of my goodness," continued the speaker. "I intend to deal justly with all men and show mercy to the unfortunate; and, Mr. Stafford, I *don't* intend to enrich myself at the cost of other men's souls."

"Mr. Byam, I stand convicted. You are a paragon of perfection, and no one has a right to dispute your claim, but——"

"I presume I know what you would say."

"Clyde Stafford," now said George Hilliard, whose presence had not before been observed, "I know of what you can justly accuse me in the past, but having put all that behind me, I hope to prove myself worthy of a good man's friendship."

"When you have paid what it cost your father to save you from the clutches of the law, and he has paid what he owes Mr. Brenner, it will be time for you to talk about being worthy of a good man's friendship."

"That time will come, Clyde Stafford, if I live; and to-day I am not ashamed to look you in the face. Mr. Byam has been a friend whose kindness I can never repay. You had a cooler head than mine. Where you won, I lost; but when I was at the lowest, I never saw the day

when I would be guilty of making or selling beer. That is too low for even such a beggar as I was.

"As for Mr. Byam, you would not dare speak against him in the city where he is so well known. He is universally respected."

"Perhaps you are respected. If your whole story was told, how would it be then?"

"My whole story has been told. I am not sailing under false colors. At first I wished to hide myself, and desired nothing else so much as to be forgotten by all who had ever heard my name, but I have changed since then. You cannot accuse me of worse than I have confessed, and, thank God, you cannot lead me back into the old way."

"I lead you back! Do you accuse me of leading you into the excesses of which you have been guilty?" exclaimed Clyde Stafford angrily, emphasizing his words with a terrible oath.

"I accuse you of nothing," replied George Hilliard. "I have no wish to excuse myself by blaming another. But before I leave town I have a question to ask you; it will be for your interest to answer truthfully."

"Do you mean to insinuate that I am not in the habit of speaking truthfully?"

"I insinuate nothing. I only made a remark you will do well to heed."

By this time a crowd had gathered to listen to the colloquy; and having kept silence until it seemed a fitting time for him to speak, Thad Byam said in a quiet tone:

"Mr. Hilliard is my friend. He has done wrong in the past. Who of us has not? He has repented of the wrong. Who of us has done that? His father is deeply in debt to Mr. Brenner because of that wrong, but something has been paid on that debt; and I undertake to say that every dollar now due will be paid. I am ready to go bail for my friend's honesty in future.

"I have no quarrel with Mr. Stafford personally, but when the people of this town allowed him to come here to build a brewery they put a heavy mortgage on the boys and young men. Some of them are paying the interest on that mortgage. In a few years interest and principal will all be in the hands of the mortgagee.

"And that saloon, started, as the proprietor says, for the convenience of Mr. Stafford's workmen. If only for them, why are such efforts made to induce the boys to drink beer, smoke, and chew tobacco? The saloon and the brewery will do a wholesale business. Who will dare to say the business will be an advantage to the town?"

"I dare to say it. When we can sell our bar-

ley for cash, without middlemen's profits, there will be a great advantage. Some men will get more money for their crop than they ever got in one year before; and there will be more than one farm saved from going under the hammer. You won't claim that all this is a disadvantage to the town."

"I claim that the brewery will prove an unmitigated curse to the town, but I will not prolong this conversation. I should not have said so much if Mr. Stafford had not attacked my friend."

"No one envies you his friendship," was muttered in reply, as Thad Byam turned to speak to an old man standing near.

At that moment George Hilliard went nearer to Clyde Stafford, and asked in a low tone:

"When will you give me a private interview?"

"I am too busy to waste time in private interviews," was replied gruffly.

"I will not detain you more than five minutes. In fact, you can answer my questions in less time than that. I leave on the night train, and you must tell me what I wish to know before I leave."

"What if I refuse?"

"You will take the consequences. I can brand you as a villain, and if an old man and his daughter——"

"So that's it, is it? Of course you would be hatching up some trumpery charge against me, but no one will credit anything you say."

"I have made no charge against you, but I must know——"

"I shall give you no information."

"That is your decision?"

"Yes. Are you satisfied?"

"So far satisfied, that I shall act accordingly. That you won money from me when I was in no condition to defend myself, is to my shame and disgrace; but when you induced an old man to drink until intoxicated, and then took from him his last dollar, you committed a crime of which the law takes cognizance."

"Perhaps you would appear as a witness against me," said the brewer with a sneer.

"I certainly would, and black Charley would appear with me," was replied. "He had his eyes and ears open, and nobody would doubt his word."

"You would not claim the same truthfulness for yourself."

"I would not accuse you wrongfully, but if I felt obliged to proceed to extremities, I should take Mr. Byam into my confidence. He would know how to manage the case."

"I have no fear of him. What does he know of gamblers and gambling, unless he is one of the initiated?"

"He is not a gambler. I am sure he has never seen the inside of a gambler's den, and I wish I could say as much for myself. But I am anxious now to have justice done Mr. Pulsifer. I think I know a lawyer who would undertake the case; one who has no reason to respect either you or your father."

"That means Owen, I suppose. He better look out for himself before he tries to help others."

"He is able to do both."

"How came you to know so much about everybody? Where have you been for the last two years?"

"That is no business of yours, Clyde Stafford. I am here now for a purpose. In coming here it was not my first purpose to see you, but you cannot deny that I know enough of you to ruin your reputation in any respectable community."

"I might retaliate. What brought you here, anyway?"

"I came to this town to pay Mr. Brenner some money. I have not yet seen him. I presume you thought you were well rid of me."

"I did; and I wished never to see you again."

"That I do not doubt; and only for my interest in an unfortunate man and his daughter, I should not have sought this interview."

"If you fancy I have any information to give

you, you will find yourself mistaken ; but if you are determined to prolong this interview, come into my office."

It was a strange meeting for the two who had parted at the door of a saloon, through which, two years before, they had made their way to a gambling-room above. One had lost, the other had won. One went out into the darkness desperate and reckless ; the other buttoned his coat around him, congratulating himself upon his ill-gotten gains.

"Where is Mr. Pulsifer?" asked George Hilliard when the office door was closed behind them.

"I have not seen him for a year, and then only a moment, as I passed him in the street," was replied.

"And his daughter?"

"She was with him. I had not seen her before since I saw you. I am telling you the truth," continued the speaker ; judging rightly, that his companion would be disposed to doubt this assertion. "I pitied the old man, and made an effort to find him, but I could get no clue to his whereabouts. I would have been glad to help him."

"Would you have returned the money you took from him? You had no more right to it than any thief has to the money he steals."

"You mean to say that I had no more right to it than you had to the money you obtained on a forged note?"

"Exactly that. The value of the forged note was repaid. Will you repay the thousand dollars taken from Mr. Pulsifer when he was so under the influence of liquor as to be incapable of defending himself?"

"He was not obliged to drink the liquor."

"You and I know all about that, Clyde Stafford. I know far more than I wish I did, and I was by no means blameless in the affair. If I can find the old man, I shall try to make what amends I can. Will you try to do the same?"

"I will wait until I am sure Mr. Pulsifer will receive what I choose to give him. Have you any more questions to ask?"

"One more, and then I have done with you for the present. Will you return the money taken from Mr. Pulsifer?"

"If you can prove that I have taken money from Mr. Pulsifer to which I had no right, I will return it."

"I am answered. You will hear from me again."

Clyde Stafford stood for fully ten minutes leaning against his desk, as he had stood when George Hilliard left him. He had spoken truly when he said he knew nothing of Mr. Pulsifer's

whereabouts; yet that the old man would be found he did not doubt.

It would go hard with him to relinquish the money he had no scruples in counting his own; but it would be harder still to be branded as a villain.

CHAPTER XXIII.

DR. LASH.

It had been Clyde Stafford's intention to open his brewery with appropriate ceremonies ; making a holiday not only for his workmen, but for all others who would join in the festivities. Instead of this, he commenced the work of beer-making so quietly, that only those most interested knew when this was done.

It was true that he had distributed much money in town ; also that he had given employment to many who would otherwise seek it elsewhere. He manufactured the barrels and casks necessary for his use ; purchasing the lumber from those he was pleased to call his " neighbors."

He wished to establish friendly relations with the people. He had thought himself sure of their favor until adverse influences had told against him.

His failure to secure the Brenner place was a greater disappointment than he would have acknowledged. He knew that Mr. Brenner was now in a position to prove a formidable antag-

onist; while Tamson was drawing around her a large circle of young people who were ready to assist her in any enterprise she might undertake.

"It is unfortunate that that mortgage slipped through your fingers," remarked Mr. Stafford, senior, to his son.

"It was no fault of mine," was replied. "I could not refuse the money when it was offered me."

"They say Mr. Anslow furnished it."

"Yes, and he is sure to receive it again. It will not take long for the place to clear itself. The old man will retrieve his fortune."

"So I have heard. He has the most desirable place within twenty miles. I would pay every dollar it is worth if I could get possession of it."

"Money would not buy it."

"Then there is Cold Spring, and the land around it."

"Mr. Anslow will own that while he lives. He will never sell a foot of land; neither will his sister. There are some strange people about here."

"I think so, Clyde. At first it seemed as though a shrewd man could wind them 'round his finger. Now they are on the alert; so distrustful, they will hardly believe the evidence

of their own senses. Anyway, you are established here, and I am ready to help you punish your enemies. Money will do almost anything. It is as true now as it ever was, that every man has his price."

"There are some exceptions to that rule, father."

"That may be, but I have seen few in my life."

"There are some to be seen in this town."

"Are you really beginning to admire Mr. Brenner as well as his daughter?"

"Both are worthy of admiration. Tamson Brenner is a rare girl. I will say that for her, even if she does not approve of my business."

The father frowned and made no reply to this. He did not care to hear the Brenner family praised, and presently he was talking of sales, freight, and profits. Plans were perfected, estimates made, and, lastly, the Stafford beer was sampled, and pronounced in every way desirable.

"Your fortune is made," said the elder gentleman decidedly. "In ten years you can whistle at the teetotalers, and buy them out by the score. The saloon seems to be doing a good business. Anybody who once gets a taste of this beer is likely to try it again. It is a good, healthy drink, no matter who says to the con-

trary. Your workmen thrive on it. They are a hearty-looking set."

Clyde Stafford was about to make some response to these assertions when Dr. Lash entered the office; his stout figure and bloated face betraying his habits.

"A glass of beer!" he exclaimed, as this was offered him. "You need never expect me to refuse such drink. I believe in it. I believe, too, that better beer was never brewed. It braces me up, and, Mr. Stafford, you may be sure I lose no opportunity to sound its praises. I am sorry everybody does not think about it as I do."

"I am sorry too, doctor, but we can hardly expect all the world to endorse our opinions. I believe in every man judging for himself, without being dictated what he shall eat or drink."

"There is where we agree, Mr. Stafford; but I don't like to hear my friends accused of being enemies to the town when I know they are helping it every day."

The old doctor was ready for another glass of beer, and continued his potations until he became even more demonstrative than usual in his professions of friendship. It was true that he lost no opportunity to praise the brewery and its work.

On one occasion, after Luke Brenner had overheard him talking to some young men in a strain the listener could not but condemn, he was confronted with the question :

"If your boy had lived, would you be willing to see him a drunkard?"

A deeper color suffused the doctor's face, and his husky voice was hardly audible, as he answered :

"My boy a drunkard! My boy was as dear to me as your boy was to you."

"I do not doubt it," was responded. "He was a noble boy, of whom any father might be proud. My Herbert was very dear to me, but I would rather have him in his grave than have him live to be a beer-drinker. The boys of the town are just as much to their parents as our boys were to us. If your boy had lived, would you wish to see him a patron of the saloon?"

"I—I—I don't know just how I should feel if my boy had lived."

"You know you would not wish him to be a drunkard."

"Anything but that, Mr. Brenner. I could not bear that. I'm not a teetotaler myself. A little stimulant does me good, but my boy might have been different. I should want him to be all he could be, and I can't deny but what tee-

totalers are on the safe side. I should want my boy to stand well in the world."

"You would be satisfied to have him stand as well as Thad Byam."

"I could not expect anything better, 'though likely it would have been in a different way."

"Doubtless it would. The same gifts are not for all. Did you hear Thaddeus Byam talk in the temperance meeting?"

"No, Mr. Brenner, I did not. No one can regard drunkenness with greater abhorrence than I do, but I am not prepared to go all lengths, as many do, in condemning the moderate use of alcoholic stimulants. Used with discretion, they give tone to the system when other tonics have failed. Of course, excess is always to be avoided in drinking as well as in eating."

"It would be useless for us to discuss this question, doctor. We have learned already that neither will abandon his position. But I have something to tell you, which I think you ought to hear, and which I hope will influence you in the future. You remember young Paul Nye, who spent a few weeks in town last summer."

"I do. He was under my care as a physician, and I had the pleasure of knowing that the treatment recommended by me proved beneficial. He gained so much in strength and weight, he hardly seemed like the same person.

His was one of the cases in which stimulants are absolutely required."

"It may seem so to you, doctor, but nothing could have been more unfortunate for the young man. Stimulants may have given him for the time an increase of strength, but had you known the final result of your treatment, you would sooner have given him poison."

"Mr. Brenner, what can you mean? I have not heard from young Nye for several months, but the last report was satisfactory."

"I heard from him two weeks ago, and he is drinking himself to death. He comes of a family of drunkards, so that the inherited appetite needed only the first indulgence to rouse it to vigorous life. When sober the young man bewails his fate, blaming his mother for not warning him of his danger, and blaming you for the treatment you recommended. At the same time he curses himself for his weakness, while he seems to have no power to control his appetite. He will not live long, and hard as it seems to say such a thing of one who has so much to bind him to life, it is not desirable that he should. He is engaged to be married to a most lovely young lady. He is devotedly attached to her, and she loves him, but she will never be his wife."

"If Nye had only taken what I ordered, he

would have had no trouble. If he drinks to excess, and so makes himself drunk, I am not responsible. His system needed toning up, and he ought to have had judgment enough to stop when he had taken the prescribed quantity of stimulant."

"Appetite overrides judgment. You have lived long enough to know that, doctor. It is almost certain that Paul Nye will die a drunkard. I am very sorry for him and his friends."

"I am sorry, Mr. Brenner, but I don't consider myself responsible. Any man, sick or well, should use moderation. That is my doctrine, and I calculate to practice as I preach."

"It may do for you; but, for the sake of others, I wish you could be induced to throw your influence on the side of teetotalism. We need your help. We are threatened by an unscrupulous enemy. I know you favored the brewery, but it cannot be possible, doctor, that you approve of the saloon?"

"Well, Mr. Brenner, I can't say that I approve of the way that saloon is managed. I don't believe in trying to get boys into a place their parents want to keep them away from."

"If your boy and mine had lived we should have tried to keep them away from drinking-saloons."

"We should, Mr. Brenner. I am free to say that."

"You must believe that the saloon in our town is run in Mr. Stafford's interest, and that whatever is done to draw business there is done with his approval, if not at his suggestion."

"I know folks say so, but Mr. Stafford is as much opposed to the immoderate use of alcoholic drinks as we are."

"Not so much as I am, doctor. I consider any drinking immoderate and injurious. It is impossible to estimate the injury it may do. You were called in to see Mrs. Sprague's daughter yesterday?"

"I was, and found her in a very low state. I am afraid she has not had such nourishing food as she needed. I prescribed better food, with beer as a tonic."

"Do you remember you once said it was a mercy William Sprague's only child was a girl? You said if he had left a son, nothing short of a miracle would have saved that son from being a drunkard."

"I may have said so, although I have no remembrance of it. Bill Sprague was a hard drinker, but there is no danger for Miranda. She has always hated liquor. She can take it as a medicine whenever her system requires it."

"I am glad to know she will not run the

risk. I saw Mrs. Sprague this morning, and not a drop of beer will be allowed in her house."

"It may be, Mr. Brenner, that is the best way for her. There are exceptions to all rules, and we have known each other too long to quarrel for matters of opinion. I am glad you are going to save your place, and I must say that your daughter has shown herself a most remarkable girl—a most remarkable girl."

CHAPTER XXIV.

STARVING.

"It's glad I am that ye're to the fore this mornin', Miss Hilliard," said a smiling Irish woman, as she opened the door of a small room in the shed, which, for want of a better place, had been fitted up as an office. "I was wishin' ye'd be the one I'd find. There's nothin' but yere father's all right. But I'm tradin' for the whole house, barrin' two, and I'm wantin' the money to go as far as iver it can."

"If you are trading for the whole house you must have a large sum of money, Mrs. Connihee," replied Grace Hilliard.

"It's mistaken ye are there, Miss. It's but little I have gathered in pennies and nickels. We're that poor we could do no more, but there's them that's poorer. An' old man and a young girl come to live on the upper floor last month, and nobody knowing what they have for eating or firing. It's me belief they're near starvin'."

"Starving?"

"Starvin' and freezin' both."

"That is dreadful, Mrs. Connihee."

"Yes, Miss; dreadful things happen every day. I went through the house and this is what I gathered. I've a lad waitin' outside with an ould sled, and when ye'll be plazed to measure up what ye'll give for the money, he'll be takin' it along."

Grace Hilliard listened to further surmises in regard to the old man and his daughter, whose isolation and evident poverty had called forth the sympathy of their humble neighbors. Mrs. Connihee assisted in packing the wood; at last declaring that she had more than could be afforded for the amount she had paid.

"You see I saved a bit for bread and mate and a measure of milk," she said as she was about to leave. "I wint to the market on the corner, where there's a woman, and whin I tould her how it was she threw in a bit."

"Now ivery cint has gone, but the hardest for me is to come. I've to carry the wood and the basket, niver knowin' if they'll be angry or plazed. They're not our kind at all. They're Yankees, and niver another in the house."

"I shall wish to hear more of them," responded Grace Hilliard.

"So you shall, Miss. I'll be tellin' ye as fast as I know."

Until then Mrs. Connihee had hardly thought of the awkward position in which she might find herself in delivering the articles the purchase of which had given her so much pleasure. She could afford little time for consideration, and as she afterward said she made up her mind to go right along, "without batin' the bush or askin' lave."

She knocked at the door of the upper room, when it was opened by a man, whose gaunt figure and haggard face betrayed the privations from which he had suffered.

"I'm one of yer neighbors, and I've brought ye some things I'm hopin' ye'll be willin' to take."

Saying this, she proffered the basket, which was eagerly snatched with a murmured "Thank God. He must have sent you."

"And I'm thinkin' He did that same," replied the woman. "And here is wood for firin'," she added, as the boy came up the stairs with his arms full.

"Thank God," again exclaimed the man. "Child, child, here is food and fuel. We shall not starve or freeze. Oh, my child, hear me, hear me."

In a corner of the room, upon a sack filled with straw, lay the form of one addressed as "child," but there was no response to this appeal.

Mrs. Connihee sprang in, knelt by the wretched bed, and seizing the hands which chilled her as the hands of the dead, she cried:

“May God forgive me if I have come too late.”

A moment after, as she pressed the cold hands to her breast, there was a slight movement of the prostrate figure, showing that life was not extinct.

“Save her. Save her,” moaned the father, tottering across the room, which was bare of furniture, except a small rusty stove, a rickety table, two chairs, and some battered tin dishes, which might have been rescued from a dust-heap.

“Go for something hot,” said the woman, and the boy who had waited hurried away, to return almost immediately with a bowl of coffee and a spoon.

Without further orders, he proceeded to light the fire, then he took a loaf of bread from the basket, and breaking a piece, gave it to the man, who seemed oblivious of all personal needs, and whose only anxiety was for his daughter.

“She’s near dead,” exclaimed Mrs. Connihee.

“I know it,” said the father. “I’ve watched her, and wanted to find some work, so she could be comfortable, but she kept me with her.”

At sound of her father's voice, the girl—for she was only a girl, despite the look of age upon her face—opened her eyes and made an effort to speak, but no sound came from her lips. Yet her father answered :

“I will not go. I promised you. We may die together, but I will not leave you.”

By this time the house was aroused. A kind-hearted woman came in bringing a bowl of hot soup, which she urged the man to drink.

“My daughter first,” he replied. “Nothing for me until she has eaten.”

“I’ve a dhrap o’ whiskey ordered for me mither whin she was that wake she naded it. Wull I fetch it?”

“No! No! No!”

These words, uttered by the daughter, were distinctly heard, and the next instant her father fell senseless to the floor.

Then all was confusion; but at length Mrs. Connihee succeeded in making the room comfortable, and administering such nourishment as could be safely taken by persons so near starvation.

She remained with them for several hours, although she could illy afford to lose so much from her working day; and in that time she became convinced that the innocent was suffering with the guilty the penalty of wrong doing.

She judged rightly that the girl dared not trust her father away from her, lest he should yield to his craving for strong drink.

All this was told Grace Hilliard that evening, who was so much interested that she improved an early opportunity to call upon these strangers; ostensibly looking for some one who would do plain sewing for a reasonable compensation. One call succeeded another, until she had learned so much of the history of this father and daughter, that her warmest sympathies were enlisted in their behalf.

She found work for them, counselled, encouraged, and helped them; and in the spring had the happiness of knowing that their fortunes had been greatly improved by her efforts.

"I am so thankful I can do something for others," she said to her sister, who was less inclined to outside benevolent work. "Think how we have needed help, and how good everybody has been to us. When I think it all over, I feel like getting down on my knees and thanking God for all His mercies.

"We are so much better off than when we came to this house. George is coming home, and I can earn money, and father is doing so well, and—and—why, Mollie, we never can be half thankful enough for all the good that has come to us. If I could prevent it, no one should

ever be cold or hungry. I know how dreadful it is."

"Don't speak of it, Grace. I wish I could forget it all. I am as thankful as you are, but I can't feel about it just as you do.

"You are stronger and braver than I am. I never could do as you have done; not even to save the family. You have saved us all, George with the rest. I don't wonder he calls you his good angel, and says he should never have pulled through but for you."

"Whatever he calls me, I shall be delighted to see him. I am sure he will never go wrong again. He will pay Mr. Brenner a little on the debt."

"But the debt is so large and the interest so much."

"Every dollar paid makes the debt smaller. That is the best way to think of it, and you, Mollie, are doing your part every day. You make everything go so far, it seems as though everything multiplied in your hands. You are a wonderful manager."

George Hilliard realized how much he owed to this sister, who shrank from no labor which could in any way benefit those she loved with a self-sacrificing affection of which few are capable. How gladly he was welcomed home, and how delightful home seemed to him! He won-

dered he could ever have turned away from it to seek the companionship of the low and vile; himself, as he acknowledged, vile as the vilest.

"It seems to me I must have been insane to do as I did, but it was an insanity for which I am responsible both to God and man. I wonder I did not die of exposure and hunger. The veriest beggar in the street is surer of needed food than I was."

"How could you go on in that way so long?" asked Grace, to whom her brother had spoken thus frankly of the experience in regard to which he had before seemed unwilling to allude.

"You can never understand how I could do it, little sister. Thank God, too, that you never can. One must sink very low to comprehend how a man can cut loose from everything which makes life desirable, and plunge into such depths of degradation that he almost forgets his humanity. But there are more men doing that very same thing than the uninitiated would think possible. Many of them, too, have been brought up in homes of elegance; and too many of them acquired their taste for liquor in those homes."

"It seems sometimes as though most of the real misery in the world was made by drinking liquor. The poor women who have come here for wood have told me some pitiful stories."

"But after all, little sister, the most pitiful

stories are never told. Some are sinned against, and some are sinning. Poor Ben Arles! I have written you about him?"

"Yes. Don't you think his father did wrong in pushing him out into the world, instead of trying to make him better?"

"Certainly I do, and I am more sorry for the boy on that account."

The brother and sister talked on. Each had much to tell the other. At length Grace chanced to speak of Mr. Pulsifer and his daughter Annis.

"Mr. Pulsifer!" exclaimed her brother. "Tell me about him. He ought not to be so poor. Tell me about him."

George Hilliard asked many questions in regard to this man and his daughter, saying finally:

"There was a Providence in your finding them. Mr. Pulsifer was defrauded of a thousand dollars by a man who, I think, can be compelled to return it. At any rate, I shall do my best for him."

"Clyde Stafford?"

"Yes; Clyde Stafford, the brewer."

CHAPTER XXV.

RIGHTING A WRONG.

CLYDE STAFFORD read the letter, and, with a muttered oath, threw it to the floor. Soon, however, he took it again, read it with more deliberation than before, and then laid it carefully with some private papers in a drawer of which he alone had the key.

Ill at ease, he read the letter several times during the day, always returning it to the drawer. At last, as if to bind himself more strongly by the promise, he said aloud :

"I will never do it," repeating this with marked emphasis, until the very sound of his voice gave him courage.

He left his office and went out into the street, where he joined a group of men who were evidently discussing some topic of general interest. Upon his approach they were silent, when he accosted them with the remark :

"I hope I am not intruding."

"Not at all," replied one. "We were just talking of the new move made by Mr. Brenner."

He has just opened a wood and lumber yard in the city, and put it in charge of Mr. Hilliard, who was his heaviest debtor. I presume they have made a private bargain. At any rate, nobody knows what it is."

"Mr. Brenner must have great confidence in human nature," responded Clyde Stafford. "Not many would put themselves in the power of a man who had once defrauded them; and this man of all others, who has proved himself utterly unworthy."

"Then you know Mr. Hilliard?"

"I have known of him for years. He would probably never have gone down as he did, if he had not done so much for his son."

"I have heard of that, but they say the son has reformed, and bids fair to be a first-rate business man."

"Yes, and he is to superintend the cutting of lumber on the Brenner place, and anywhere else where he can buy trees that suit him," said another. "They say young Hilliard has been pretty low down; but now he has reformed, Mr. Brenner is ready to give him a helping hand, and nobody knows better how to do it."

Clyde Stafford stayed to hear no more. He went back to his office and wrote to his father, asking for a loan of a thousand dollars. Then he sat down and computed the interest on this

sum for the length of time it was claimed he had wrongfully held possession of it.

Circumstances were against him, and he was forced to yield to the will of one whom he cordially hated.

A week from that time Mr. Pulsifer received from the hands of George Hilliard the money, the loss of which had brought to him and his so much of suffering.

"I am more than glad to bring you this," said the messenger. "I was not guiltless in the affair, and I have always hoped the time would come when I could make some reparation. I have done it now by inducing Stafford to repay you."

"I owe you more than I can express," responded the old man, his voice trembling with emotion, and his eyes filling with tears. "You have given me back what it was a crime for me to lose. I must have been insane to do as I did.

"The wine I drank made me perfectly reckless. I remember throwing down my pocket-book containing every dollar I had in the world; but when I try to recall what transpired immediately after that, everything is confused. I am not sure where my daughter found me. I don't know how we lived until a kind-hearted Irish woman came to us in the garret where we were starving.

"Annis cared only to be hidden away where she could die in peace, and I was ready to die with her. Not that I was fit to die, but I felt that nothing could be worse than what we had endured. This place, your sister found for us, seemed like a palace when we came here; and together we have managed to earn enough to pay the rent and provide ourselves with comfortable food. Now you have made us rich, and may God bless you."

"May God bless you."

The very words Ben Arles had so often murmured in the ears of his friend, making the heart of this friend to rejoice, that, notwithstanding all he had sinned and suffered, it was yet possible for him to bring happiness to others. He was ready to respond to any call where he could be of service, thankful for the opportunity thus to express his repentance for past selfishness.

He had not been long at home when one of the wealthiest women in the city called upon him at his father's, and who, as he entered the room where she awaited him, said hurriedly:

"I have come to ask if you know anything of my son. Have you seen him within two years?"

"I saw him about a year ago," replied George Hilliard.

"Excuse my abruptness," now said Mrs. Lit-

ton. "When I saw you I thought only of my son. Ever since I knew you were in the city I have felt that you could tell me something about him. Was he——"

She could not say more, but he to whom this incomplete question was addressed knew what she would have asked, and answered accordingly.

"When I saw your son last he told me he was fully resolved to change his course of life. He solemnly pledged himself never to play another game of chance or taste a drop of any alcoholic drink, and I believed that he would redeem his pledge."

"Do you know if he has kept it until now?"

"I feel sure that he has."

"Do you know where he is?"

"As I have not heard from him since, I cannot be positive, but I think I could find him."

"Oh, if I could only see him! My poor, misguided boy. I was so proud of him. I never thought I should live to see the day when I should wish I had no son."

"Do not wish so now, Mrs. Litton. I believe you will live to see the day when you will be thankful for your son."

"If I only could, I should be the happiest woman in the world," exclaimed the half-distracted mother. "I wouldn't mind being poor as the poorest. I would give all I am worth to

be sure my son would return to me what he should be. His father never mentions his name, but he is not forgotten.

"I think of him sometimes as wandering from place to place, cold and hungry, and perhaps half starved. I think he may be suffering for the very necessities of life, while we are living in luxury, although it does not seem possible that a boy brought up as he was could ever go down so low."

"I have sometimes thought, Mrs. Litton, that such boys are more likely to go down into the depths when they have once cast off restraint. There are many tramping the country, or skulking in garrets and cellars, who were brought up in elegant homes and accustomed to every luxury. The very fact that they have thrown away so much makes them the more desperate."

"It may be so. Oh, my poor boy! My poor boy! If I could see him once more, if only for an hour!"

Here the unhappy woman began to weep, and for a time was unable to control her emotions.

"I have troubled you," she sobbed at length. "You cannot know a mother's heart. Her child is dearer than her life. Will you find my son for me? Here is money," she added, taking from her reticule a well-filled pocket-book. "It

is money I have saved for him; only a small part of it, but enough to pay your travelling expenses if he is in the country. If not, come to me for more.

"Find him, and tell him I can forgive everything if he will only come back to me. If he must be a drunkard let him drink at home, where I can make him comfortable. I would rather carry liquor to him with my own hands, than have him a wanderer on the face of the earth. Anything, if he will only come back to me."

How could George Hilliard tell this mother that, if living, her son was looking through prison-bars, hundreds of miles away; that he had been sentenced under an assumed name, and, as he himself said, Charles Litton had left the world! Of the crime of which he had been adjudged guilty he declared himself innocent; and looking back now with clear vision, his old comrade believed that he had spoken truly.

The interview with Mrs. Litton was prolonged until she had persuaded her companion to go in search of the son she so longed to see. He could but yield to her entreaties; hoping that in some way Providence would aid him. He prepared for the journey without delay, guarding another's secret, as he told his family it was necessary he should leave them for a few days.

He knew the old haunts well, but no one of all he met would recognize in him the wretched tramp whose very presence they had scorned two years before. Even when admitted to the prison in which Charles Litton was confined, he was obliged to prove his identity by reference to some past experiences known only to the prisoner and himself.

The two conversed together until notified that the time allowed for visitors had expired ; but short as the interview seemed, Charles Litton had given his friend a clue to the perpetrator of the crime of which he had been unjustly accused.

"I am sure that I am right, and if the fellow can be found, I believe you can force a confession from him," he said as they parted after many expressions of gratitude on his part.

It was not mere chance which that same day prostrated the real criminal upon the bed from which he was never more to rise and which moved him to make a tardy confession, exonerating the man then serving time for the crime he had himself committed.

The prison doors were opened and Charles Litton was again in the world. Then home to the mother whose love had never failed him, and who welcomed him as one given back from the dead.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE END.

"WE are coming to the end," said Jacob Hill to his wife one day in early autumn, as she met him at the door on his return from the village. "Joel is dying."

"How do you know that he is dying?" she asked in a constrained voice.

"I have a letter. A woman wrote it. She says Joel is dying among strangers, without friends or money. He is in the same city with Thad Byam."

"Thad would help him if he knew it."

"Yes; but I must go to Joel. I want to see him. It is ten years since I saw him last. He has been a burden and a trial, but thinking of him as dying makes me forget all that. We have worked hard to pay his debts, honest and dishonest, and now we are coming to the end I want to see him.

"I wish he was here with us. It would make me happier all my life to remember that he spent his last days in my home. I tried to do the right thing for him when he was a

boy, but I am afraid I made mistakes. If his mother had lived he might have been different."

"You have done your whole duty by him, Jacob. I am sure of that; and now, if he can be brought here, I will give him a sister's welcome."

"Dear, good wife, I don't know as I ought to expect that of you. You have sacrificed a great deal for him; more than I had a right to ask of you; and now there will be expenses somebody must pay."

"We will pay them. Don't let him die a pauper. We have a home, and we are not so old but what we can work."

"Yes, Prudence, the Lord has been good to us, notwithstanding the hard places in our lives. I can never feel like complaining, with such a wife as I have had. I can take the afternoon train if I go at once."

Mrs. Hill hastened her husband's departure, and was looking forward to some lonely hours, when Tamson Brenner appeared, sure of the welcome always awaiting her.

"I was in such haste to reach here I could not take the time to enjoy my walk," said the visitor. "I wished to see you and Cousin Jacob. Nothing is wrong," she added, replying to the look of inquiry with which her announcement had been received.

"I don't know how matters could be going any better for us, but I am thinking of our young people. It sometimes seems as though those who are against us are more than those who are for us. I believe I am growing discouraged."

"What has happened to discourage you?" asked Cousin Prudence.

"Only what is happening every day; except that the saloon is more aggressive."

"I have heard that your young ladies' union is becoming more aggressive, and that you have a good many honorary members among the young men and boys."

"We have, and we are hoping for more; but father says alcohol is in the ascendant despite all we have done."

"I am sorry. What a terrible thing it is for a man to ruin himself, soul and body; and it seems to me even worse for men to make and sell what brings such misery into the world!"

"Such men don't care for the misery in the world. They think only of the profits of their business."

"Clyde Stafford calculates to be a wealthy man, and I suppose the chances are in his favor."

"Certainly they are, Cousin Prudence. His beer has already gained a reputation which

ensures the sale of every gallon he can put on the market."

"They say he pays a fair price for barley, and always has the money ready for everybody who sells to him. I suppose that is a help to the farmers, and he urges them to raise all the barley they can. Then he wants them to try his beer."

"That is what I have heard, but father says there are men ready to sell him barley and lumber who despise him and his business. They wouldn't drink his beer any more than they would drink poison.

"Cousin Prudence, something is troubling you this morning, and I have been so absorbed in my own perplexities, that I did not read the trouble in your face until this minute," now exclaimed Tamson Brenner; asking in the same breath, "Can I help you?"

"It will help me just to tell you about it," was replied, and for the next half hour the visitor listened to a story, the like of which has been often told, yet now seemed strangely new.

"And that is why——"

"That is why, with all we have earned and saved, we are still poor," said Prudence Hill, interrupting her companion. "As we had no children, we thought it was right to do what

we could for Joel; even if there was danger that we should suffer for it in our old age. I never begrudged the money spent for him, but I have begrudged the worry Jacob has had about him. Since we came here we have known less of Joel, but I was sure the time would come when there would be a call for more help.

"Your father has known something about it. Joel is not your father's cousin. Jacob's mother was a Brenner, but Joel is the son of a second wife."

"Only a half-brother."

"That makes no difference with Jacob. He loves him all the more because he is so much younger. Joel was a handsome boy, with such winning ways, it was hard to refuse him anything."

"Why did he go wrong, Cousin Prudence?"

"I don't know. I have asked that question over and over again, but I never could get an answer that satisfied me. He was a favorite wherever he went, and likely he found company that led him astray. Jacob looked after him, but he had a way of making excuses and smoothing things over, so it was hard work to talk to him."

"Was it better to keep paying out money for him?"

"I don't know that, Tamson. So far as we know, we kept him from being shut up as a

common drunkard, and we kept him from making a good woman wretched by marrying her. It would have killed Jacob to think of him in prison. Now he is dying, and there is not much more we can do for him.

"But let us not talk of him longer. I heard that Black was in trouble about his boys and had threatened to prosecute the saloon-keeper for selling them beer and tobacco."

"I think that is true, but I fear his boys have gone too far for him to call them back. It was a long time before he would believe they were in any danger. Now they seem perfectly reckless."

"I am sorry for their mother, but their father deserves to be punished."

"He is punished every day, Cousin Prudence. If it was possible for him to sweep the brewery with its shops and houses out of town, he would do so. He came to me last week and asked me to use my influence to induce his boys to attend our temperance meetings and sign our pledge. I told him I had asked them several times to attend our meetings and they had always declined, but I would ask them again the first opportunity."

"They are bright boys."

"Too bright to be sacrificed to the greed for gain. Father says that so far as dollars and

cents are concerned, the manufacture and sale of alcoholic drinks is the most profitable business in the country."

"Yes, and men will sell their own souls and the souls of their neighbors for money. But let us talk of something pleasant. Tell me about the bees and the fruit."

"The bees have done wonderfully well, and every pound of honey we could spare has been sold for a good price. As for the fruit, father says this is the best year we have ever had. Mother keeps account of every dollar we receive and every dollar we spend, and I never saw her so happy as she is now. She has developed a real talent for business. She has a genius for dress-making and millinery; as witness our dresses and bonnets. We shall save the Brenner place."

"I always knew you would if you set about it with a will. Jacob says the timber will prove a fortune to you, and George Hilliard will make the most of it."

"I think he will. I am sorry to see the old trees laid low, but they must do their part toward clearing the land of incumbrance."

This subject having been introduced, hostess and guest were soon absorbed in discussing questions of domestic economy, which occupied their time until Tamson Brenner was ready for her walk home.

"Tell your father about Joel," then said Mrs. Hill. "I shall expect Jacob to-morrow, and I feel sure he will bring Joel with him."

In this she was not disappointed. Just at night came the two brothers; so unlike, and yet so strongly bound to each other. Perhaps then, as never before, the younger realized what a grief and burden he had been to those who loved him.

Yet he was kindly welcomed and assisted to the room which had been made ready for him. He essayed to speak his thanks, but was prevented by a paroxysm of coughing which quite exhausted him. He lay upon the bed, panting for breath, while the tears slowly coursed down his sunken cheeks.

"Only to die," he whispered hoarsely after a short rest. "Only to die. I did not mean to trouble you any more, but I wanted to see Jacob, my dear, good brother, and his wife."

A night's sleep, such as he had not known for many weeks, so far revived him that in the morning he was able to go into the kitchen. In the afternoon he stepped outside the house, and resting in an easy-chair, gazed long upon the mountains and valleys stretching far away on every side.

This look was his last. He died that night; died suddenly, without warning.

He was buried in the village cemetery; a stranger, whose history none knew save those who were bound to him by the ties of kindred.

His life and death were an eloquent sermon against the sin of alcoholic drinking; but alas for the frequency of such sermons, so seldom heeded!

CHAPTER XXVII.

AT COLD SPRING.

“TROUBLE at Cold Spring.”

Mr. Anslow could learn nothing more from the boy who, having uttered these words, fell exhausted to the ground. Walking on as rapidly as possible, he soon came to the spring, where four terror-stricken lads stood looking at one who lay as if dead, his head resting upon a stone which was stained with blood.

“What have you done?” he asked; and as no reply was made, he repeated the question more sternly: “What have you done?”

“We didn’t mean to hurt him,” said one after some delay.

“What have you done? Tell me that. Have you killed this boy?”

“We didn’t mean to hurt him. We only wanted him to drink some beer, and—and when he wouldn’t we tried to pour some down his throat, and—and—he fought us. That is the way he got hurt.”

“Brave beer-drinkers! Where did you get

your beer? Tell me the truth, or it will be worse for you."

"We got it at the saloon. Mr. Scully said it wouldn't hurt a baby."

"This is Harry Webster, who has come to live with Mr. Jackman, isn't it?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where is his brother? They are usually together."

"They were, but Carl ran away and said he was going home to tell of us."

"So, to be sure of your revenge, you killed Harry?"

"Oh, Mr. Anslow, we didn't mean to hurt him. We only wanted some fun."

"You may find it serious fun. There is a law against such brutality; and such a little fellow, too. Shame on you. You deserve to be severely punished."

Meanwhile Mr. Anslow had raised the prostrate boy, and was bathing his face, when, with a gasp and struggle, he regained consciousness.

"My head! My head! I wouldn't drink the beer. I wouldn't. I promised mother, and so did Carl. I told Carl to run, and he did."

The murmur ceased. The boy had fainted.

The four who were responsible for all this would gladly have left, but they were commanded to remain and dared not disobey. They

watched Mr. Anslow as he cleansed the wound from which blood continued to flow, and as he bound it with his handkerchief, one found courage to ask :

“What will be done with us?”

“That will depend upon circumstances,” was replied. “You have made yourself liable to the law on two counts. You committed trespass in coming here. This is my land, and I could prosecute you for trespass.”

“But—but other folks come. Oh, Mr. Anslow, don’t prosecute us.”

“I suppose you threw that beer-bottle into the spring. Take it out and carry it away from here.”

“Yes, we will. Don’t prosecute us. We won’t ever come here again, and we won’t ever try to make anybody drink beer who don’t want to. I wish we hadn’t this time.”

“You are John Black, are you?”

“Yes, sir.”

“And you are Henry Black?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Did your father know you were coming here to-day?”

“No, sir. He’ll be awful mad if he finds out about it.”

“How do you think Mr. Jackman will feel when he finds out about it? Now, I am going

to take this boy to my home, and you will go there too. You will keep in front of us."

It was a queer procession that moved along the narrow footpath leading to the main road, where they found the boy who had given warning of trouble at the spring.

"Carl Webster has gone home. I saw him going over the hill," said this boy.

Mr. Anslow and his sister were quite equal to the surgical treatment required by Harry Webster; so that, except for weakness and a nervous apprehension of danger, he was little the worse for his struggle.

"Can't we go?" now asked John Black, who had been the ringleader in the disgraceful affair, and who with his companions waited in the hall, not daring to go without permission.

"I have not done with you yet," was replied to his question. "I am expecting Mr. Jackman. You must settle with him, and then we will talk about the trespass on my land."

Another half-hour of waiting, and then John Black, made desperate by the suspense, cried out:

"For mercy sake, tell us the worst. We'll promise anything, if you'll only let us off. We'll come over here again to-morrow. We'll go and see Mr. Jackman. We never'll do any

such thing again as long as we live, will we, boys?"

"Never," responded each one heartily.

"I have not done with you yet," was again replied, and the boys were obliged to curb their impatience still longer.

At length Mr. Jackman appeared, with Carl in the carriage beside him.

"There'll be a reckoning for this day's work," he said angrily, as soon as he had been assured that Harry was safe. "We'll see if this new-fashioned drink is to be poured down children's throats, whether they want it or not. Carl says Black's boys were in the scrape."

Here Mr. Anslow succeeded in silencing the speaker, while he talked for some time in a low tone.

"I suppose you are right," responded the tavern-keeper when his companion paused for him to speak. "I've been thinking a good deal about it lately, 'specially since these boys came to live with me. Their mother is my niece, and I want to help her along about bringing them up. Their father didn't leave her much property, and she is at work to earn money, so to give them an education.

"She is as thorough-going temperance woman as Tamson Brenner is, and she has trained her boys to think as she does. They'd die before

they'd break the promises they made. I made some promises too, and this job settles the whole matter. I never'll drink or sell another drop of liquor stronger than tea or coffee as long as I live. If you have a pledge that covers so much ground just bring it along, and I am the man that will sign it."

There was another consultation, and then the four boys were called out; Harry Webster coming with them, still weak and pale, but so glad to see Uncle Jackman, that for the moment he forgot what he had suffered.

It was an entirely different ending to the day's fun from what had been anticipated, yet all professed themselves satisfied when a pledge of total abstinence had been signed by the entire company.

"Now we will help turn over a new leaf in the old town," said Mr. Jackman. "Just as long as you keep your pledge you are all right, but the minute you break it, you will hear from me in a way you won't like."

"We have made fools of ourselves and everybody will know it," remarked John Black as they started for home. "It was awful mean in us to treat Harry Webster as we did. I never was so scared in my life as when I saw his head bleeding and he was so still. I thought we had killed him. I wanted to run,

but my feet felt as though they were nailed to the ground."

"Didn't Mr. Anslow just put us through?" asked another of the boys.

"He did, and we deserved it," was replied. "Whew! didn't he spring that pledge on us? I've declared twenty times I never *would* sign it, and now we've just been and gone and done it. We shall keep it too."

"Of course we shall. Won't Scully be mad, and won't he do his level best to get us back! He and Stafford want everybody to drink lots of beer, so they can make lots of money. I have seen Scully do some awful mean things."

"So have I. I mean to keep out of his way till we get well settled down, and then I'll risk him. Everybody will be talking about us, anyway."

"They will talk about Mr. Jackman too."

The boys were right in this conclusion. The affair at Cold Spring, with its results, was generally discussed. The boys who had signed the pledge were congratulated by some, while by others they were ridiculed. Scully swore he would have them all back, but one effort in that direction convinced him of his mistake. They who had been loudest in their assertions of independence were still independent in do-

ing as they pleased, and they pleased to keep their pledge inviolate.

There was a larger attendance than usual at the next temperance meeting. Mr. Black was present with his four boys, so thankful and happy that, as he said, he felt as rich as if all the kingdoms of the earth had come into his possession. "I don't deserve such happiness, but if the Lord gives me health and strength I will try and make some return for it."

Mr. Jackman brought his boys to the meeting. George Hilliard was there with Ben Arles; the latter greatly improved in health by his summer's experience, and now working under the direction of his friend. He was gaining other friends, one of whom was Mr. Brenner, who was often among the men engaged in felling trees, where he always received a welcome, which he returned with kind, encouraging words.

One day, while sitting under the lindens, he was approached by a middle-aged man, poorly dressed, who asked for work.

"What can you do?" asked Mr. Brenner in reply.

"I would try to do anything by which I could earn enough to keep soul and body together," answered the man. "Last night I made up my mind to end my life, and so get out of the

way, but I couldn't do it. I thought of my mother and I couldn't do it."

"Taking one's life is the act of a coward."

"I know it, but when a man has ruined his life it makes little difference what else he does."

"The ruin can be retrieved. It is never too late to do that."

"I have decided to try, and as a beginning I am looking for work. I may as well tell you that I am a drunkard."

"You did not need to tell me that; but you are not drunk now."

"No, sir; I have not tasted liquor for three months. Nothing has passed my lips for two days except water, and some turnips and apples I found by the roadside."

"You must be faint for the want of food."

"I suppose I am, but I had hardly thought of it. I am thirsty for the drink that has ruined me, and which I will never taste again. May God strike me dead with all my sins upon my soul, if I ever taste of alcohol in any form."

"That is a terrible imprecation."

"It is, but I will not retract it."

Mr. Brenner looked at his companion for a moment and then said:

"Sit down on this bench, and I will see what can be done for you."

Dolf Turner was spending a day in the woods,

and had brought with him a basket of food, "so to have it seem more like a picnic." This he was very glad to give to the stranger, and when he delivered the basket to Mr. Brenner, he said :

"I saw that man last night when I was coming home from the village. He stood ever so long looking down into the river, just as though he meant to jump in; and I was so afraid he would, I watched him till he went away. I am glad I brought something to eat. He can have every bit there is in the basket."

The stranger was only too glad to accept the proffered food, which he ate while Mr. Brenner went in search of George Hilliard.

"I will see the man very soon," said the latter in response to an application for work. "If he will be satisfied with such wages as he can earn, we can probably find employment for him. If what he told you is true, he has come in his life to where two ways meet: one leading upward and the other downward. There is a soul to be saved or lost."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

WARREN LYFORD SAVED.

"Is there any way to stop Dr. Lash from prescribing beer for his patients? If there is, I wish it could be done before Warren Lyford is made a drunkard.

"I hope you'll forgive my writing to you, and excuse all mistakes; as I am a poor old woman, trying to do a little good in the world.

"Yours with great respect,

"PHŒBE BYAM."

There were many mistakes in spelling, and the cramped, irregular characters betrayed a hand unused to writing; but Mr. Brenner, to whom the brief note was addressed, thought only of its contents. He read it once carefully, then again aloud; adding by way of comment:

"I cannot understand why Dr. Lash should persist in his crusade for beer. Jacob Hill believes that he is paid a salary by Stafford, but it does not seem to me possible that a man like him could be bought up for such a purpose."

"Is Dr. Lash a member of our church?" asked Mrs. Brenner.

"He is, and he has always been very sensitive in regard to any criticism reflecting upon his Christian character. He claims, too, to be a temperance man, in spite of his habits and his advocacy of beer."

"I don't see how any man doing as he does can be a Christian. If he is not a fit subject for church discipline, who is? I am sure he must be doing great injury to the community."

"He surely is; and so far as I can judge, he intends to persevere in doing it. I think I will see Mrs. Byam, and inquire about the Lyfords. I did not know there was a Warren Lyford; but if there is, he needs all the safeguards that can be thrown around him."

"Is it Thaddeus Byam's grandmother who wrote you the letter?"

"Yes, my dear, and she would not have written if she was not very anxious. I will drive over to her house, and it may be I shall think best to go to the Lyfords'."

As Mr. Brenner was about starting, George Hilliard came to consult him in regard to some business, and accepted an invitation to ride with him.

"And this is where Thaddeus Byam spent his boyhood," remarked the younger man, as

they came in sight of the little brown cottage which formed an attractive feature of the landscape. "I don't wonder he loves to come back to it."

Mrs. Byam met them at the door with old-fashioned courtesy, inviting them to "come in," and expressing her pleasure at seeing them.

"You have made some improvements since I was here last," said Mr. Brenner.

"Thad makes the improvements and I enjoy them," responded the happy woman. "I have nothing to do now but to take the good he brings me. He provides me with so much, I don't feel the need of doing a great deal of work; so I have plenty of time to look after my neighbors, and lately I've been troubled about the Lyfords. I don't expect anything can be done for old Jerry, but it seems as though the grandchildren might be saved."

"I did not know there were any grandchildren there."

"They are Oscar's children. Oscar and his wife are both dead, and I don't know as it would have been any better for the children if they had lived. They were poor, and never likely to be any richer."

"Did Oscar follow his father's example?"

"Yes, sir, he did; and his wife was a poor, shiftless, discouraged thing, who didn't know

how to make the best of what she had, and didn't have much anyway. It's poor encouragement for a woman to work, when a man cares more for liquor than he does for his family.

"I want to go up to Mr. Lyford's. Mrs. Lyford and I are old friends, and I mean to see her before snow flies."

"Go with me this morning, Mrs. Byam. I will drive up there, and perhaps do some business while you are visiting. I have heard that Lyford has some fine standing timber."

"He must have, Mr. Brenner, and if I shouldn't be a trouble I should be glad to ride up there. It is a long walk, and I can't walk as well as I used to. I can tell you about Warren Lyford as we go along."

George Hilliard went back through the woods to his work, while Mrs. Byam made herself ready to accompany Mr. Brenner. To reach the Lyfords by carriage, they were obliged to go through the village. When opposite the saloon their attention was arrested by seeing Dr. Lash talking with a lad, and apparently urging him to some course of action at which he hesitated.

"That must be Warren Lyford," exclaimed Mrs. Byam. "It is more than a year since I saw him, but I can't be mistaken. He is a cripple, and you see he favors one foot as he

stands. If you would speak to him it might do good.

"I don't see how he got down here. He must have walked, for Jerry Lyford hasn't had a horse for more than five years. I wish you would speak to him. It might do good."

"I will, and if it is Warren Lyford I can take him home."

"I wish you would. He is not very strong. I heard the doctor recommended him to drink beer as a medicine, and if he once begins there can't anything stop him. It is as natural for a Lyford to drink liquor, as it is for a fish to swim."

This last remark was lost upon Mr. Brenner, who had left the carriage, and reached Dr. Lash just as he was entering the saloon with his young companion.

"Doctor, have you forgotten that you profess to be a Christian?"

This question, sharply spoken, was followed by another:

"Are you prepared to answer for another's sins in the day of judgment? If not, come away from that saloon; and, if you have any respect for yourself, never be seen near it again."

Turning to the lad, Mr. Brenner asked:

"Are you Warren Lyford?"

"Yes, sir," was replied,

"I am going to your grandfather's, and can save you a long walk if you will ride with me."

"Thank you, sir, but I must find some work to do. I want to find some work, so I can take care of my sister. Grandfather is——"

Dr. Lash had hurried away, so the two were left to themselves to continue their conversation.

"Is your grandfather sick?"

"No, sir, but—but grandmother says it is worse than it ever was before, and she don't know how we can all have enough to eat this winter. I ain't strong, but Dr. Lash says if I drink beer every day I shall grow stronger. Do you think I should?"

The questioner looked up earnestly, as if ready to accept as a final decision the answer he should receive.

"No, indeed, my boy. You would grow weaker and wickeder; and if you continued to drink beer you would be a beer-drunkard."

"So it read in the tract, but grandfather said it wasn't true. He said Dr. Lash could tell me all about it. Sallie believes the tract, but—but I didn't know."

"The tract tells the truth."

"Then Dr. Lash tells a lie."

"Dr. Lash is mistaken."

Far up on the side of the mountain, at the

end of a road so little travelled that the grasses grew rank and tall on either side of the slightly worn track, was the home of the Lyfords. John Lyford, one of the first settlers of the town, had bought a large tract of land, built a log-cabin, and brought here his bride to share in the hardships of pioneer life.

Later the log-cabin had given place to a framed house, in which sons and daughters grew to manhood and womanhood. In time, where had been the primeval forest there were cultivated fields, orchards, and broad reaches of pasture-land.

Of the thousand acres once belonging to John Lyford, less than a hundred now remained to the family, most of this valuable only for the timber growing upon it. Piece by piece the goodly estate had been sold until it came into the possession of its present owner, who had often said that not a square foot of land should go while he lived.

If he counted not an acre less it was no proof of thrift. His house was sadly out of repair. The floors were worn to a dangerous thinness; the doors sagged on their hinges; the windows presented a disgusting array of rags, old hats, and pieces of boards; while the roof, moss-grown with age, afforded but poor protection from winter's snow or summer rain. The barns

were in even worse condition than the house. Everything betokened carelessness and indifference.

Jerry Lyford could not truthfully be called a poor man, yet his family suffered all the privations of poverty. Whenever the subject of temperance was under consideration he proclaimed himself a moderate drinker, who believed in using the good things of life without abusing them.

It was a question with others if drinking could be called moderate which made such constant drain upon the time, strength, and money of the drinker. Every sale of land from the Lyford estate had been made for the payment of a debt incurred for alcoholic drinks, and still the sons followed the example of their fathers.

Jerry Lyford was an old man; his wife five years his junior, and yet feeling the effects of age and disappointment. She might struggle against her fate, but she had no power to change it. Winter would soon be upon them and little preparation had been made to meet its inclemency. Less than usual had been raised on the farm, with the exception of barley, which had been attached for debt by Jackman, the tavern-keeper, and sold to Stafford, the brewer.

“Did you owe that man?” Sallie had asked

her grandfather, who was expressing his indignation at the treatment he had received.

"Yes," he answered gruffly.

"What did you buy of him?" the child continued.

"Something I wanted; and now I've told you all I shall, so you needn't ask me any more questions."

From this time the brother and sister discussed ways and means of earning money and so supporting themselves; and having heard Dr. Lash praised as a man who could make people well and strong, Warren Lyford determined to apply to him, with what result we have already described.

CHAPTER XXIX.

TWO GOSPELS.

“MISSIONARY work to be done at Stafford’s Corner, and it must be done or the town will be overwhelmed by ignorance and beer. The longer we wait the harder it will be to make a beginning.”

So said the clergyman who had lately come to one of the village churches, and who believed heartily in the gospel of temperance.

Some missionary work had been attempted in that quarter, but it was so rudely repulsed as to quite discourage the workers.

The clergymen on the ground at the time the brewery was under consideration opposed its establishment; yet afterward, when asked to use their influence against it, hesitated, temporized, and finally submitted to what seemed to them inevitable. They could preach to all who would come to listen, and pray for those who remained away, and beyond this they felt themselves powerless.

Clyde Stafford professed to desire the best good of his workmen, and although he seldom

attended church himself, advised them to attend. He contributed to the support of each society, saying he thought it the duty of every business man to help support the institutions of religion.

One clergyman had found another field of labor; so leaving a vacant pulpit, to which was called a fearless, enthusiastic man, who left unimproved no opportunity to strike a blow at the liquor traffic. He was wont to say:

"It is the gospel of Christ and temperance against the gospel of the liquor-maker and the liquor-seller. They are pitted against each other the world over. In the end the first will win, but some one must preach it before the victory can be gained."

A new physician had also come to the town; a friend of the outspoken clergyman, a Christian and a teetotaler, who was ready at all times to give a reason for the faith that was in him.

Dr. Lash, who felt himself growing old, and whose habits were making rapid inroads upon his strength, called upon his brother physician soon after the arrival of the latter.

"This is a good town," he said, rubbing his hands vigorously. "The people are all good citizens, 'though they don't all think alike. Some are too radical, and some take things too easy. For my part, I believe in middle ground and moderation in all things."

"Often there is no middle ground," was replied. "It is for, or against, and I for one have decided opinions upon most subjects."

"A man can have opinions without expressing them. I have found it best in my life sometimes to appear to agree with others when I could not fully endorse their opinions."

"That may do very well, Dr. Lash, under some circumstances, but where principle is at stake, I believe in standing squarely for what you believe to be right."

"But we are to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves."

"Doves are well in their place, doctor, but there must be aggressive work in this world if men are to be saved. I hesitated about coming here, on account of Stafford's brewery, but Mr. Dunning thought a teetotal physician was all the more needed because of it."

"Maybe he was right, though I can't think as he does about the use of stimulants. I have had a long experience, and ought to be able to judge intelligently. I don't doubt but what Mr. Dunning is a good man, and I hope his church will sustain him. Mr. Brenner was very active in getting him here, and no doubt will stand by him. I haven't a word to say against him, but temperance isn't exactly the Gospel. I believe in ministers preaching the Gospel."

“So do I; good tidings of great joy to all the people, and every one who preaches temperance preaches just such tidings; the possibilities of human nature under its best conditions.

“These conditions are better understood than they were fifty years ago. The world has moved, and medical science has made a great advance. At one time alcoholic stimulants were recommended by all physicians; now we are learning that in most cases they injure, rather than benefit the patient. Then, too, we are beginning to understand better the great law of heredity, and hesitate to prescribe such stimulants under any circumstances, for fear we may rouse to action an inherited appetite which will not down again.

“A physician needs to take a broad outlook. He must look beyond the present exigency. You may not agree with me, Dr. Lash, and possibly you may think the new doctor as much too radical as the new minister; but I have reached my conclusions after careful study of the subject.”

“I hope you will both do good,” responded the visitor, and soon after took his leave.

Not long after this an accident occurred in the brewery, by which six men were so injured as to require skillful medical treatment. Clyde

Stafford would have sent at once for Dr. Lash, but as soon as this was proposed, one of the injured men said :

"I don't want that old sot. I won't have him touch me. I want a doctor who knows something. Send for Dr. Nute, and give him the whole job."

The men were taken to their homes, and Dr. Nute was called. Their wounds were dressed, and they were made as comfortable as their condition would permit.

"Now, it all depends upon yourself," he said to each one when leaving. "If you will follow my directions you will come out all right."

Then he gave his directions; insisting upon a meagre diet, and "not a drop of beer."

"Not a drop of beer," he repeated.

Four of the men promised to obey to the letter, while two evaded the questions intended to lead them to make such a promise.

"Weak tea, crackers, and milk!" exclaimed one, when the doctor had gone. "How can I keep up my strength on that? I shall have my rations of beer, the same as if I was at work. Stafford sha'n't make anything out of this job."

"But you know what the doctor said," urged this man's wife.

"He says, too, that beer is the worst stuff a man can drink anytime, sick or well, and I say

he don't know anything about it. He talks the biggest kind of nonsense, and I shall have my beer."

This man's next-door neighbor was of the same opinion; both asserting their independence, and claiming to know what was best for them to do. Advice and remonstrance were lost upon them. Even their employer found it impossible to influence them.

"It is no time to quarrel with a physician when you are under his care," said Clyde Stafford, realizing how much depended upon proper regimen. "Dr. Nute has the reputation of being a fine surgeon, and the best you can do is to follow his directions until you are well. Then you can go back to your old habits."

That the brewer was sincere in his advice no one could doubt. The injured men had been hired by him because they had been trained to the work he wished them to do. They were inveterate beer-drinkers, coarse, uneducated, and stubborn to the last degree. Their very looks betrayed the impurity of their blood, which would make recovery from even a slight accident doubtful and difficult.

Beer they would have at any cost, while they ridiculed the idea that it could do them an injury. The result was what had been predicted. The process of healing was arrested, and not until too late were they convinced that they had

sacrificed their lives for the gratification of a debasing appetite.

"I knew it would be so," remarked Dr. Nute to Mr. Dunning, as they were leaving the cemetery together after the funeral of these men. "They had little to fall back upon in the way of physical resistance; and, besides, they kept their blood at fever heat. To a casual observer they were stout, robust-looking men, but they were poisoned through and through with beer. They drank it more freely than they would drink water, and the end is not yet. They have left families of children to inherit disease, weakness, and a depraved appetite."

The circumstances attending these deaths were the universal topics of conversation throughout the town; some being louder than ever before in their condemnation of beer-drinking, while others quoted various authorities to prove its healthfulness. It was predicted by those whose wish was parent of the thought, that the new minister and the new doctor would find themselves so unpopular they would soon leave town.

"They won't go if I can do anything to keep them," said Mr. Jackman. "I've sold liquor, and I'm sorry for it. I'm ashamed of it. It is mean business, but I never was mean enough to pretend that in doing what I did I was helping the cause of temperance. That is what some

of the brewers say, and they know they are lying every time they say so.

“I sold Lyford’s barley to Stafford and he paid me for it. Lyford owed me for liquor. First and last, he has paid me a good deal of money. As I looked at it, I had a right to the value of that barley, but I’ll give every dollar of it to Lyford if he’ll spend it for his family. It would pay for a good stock of groceries, with some left to buy glass and shingles. That grandson of Lyford’s has been all ’round trying to find some work he can do to earn some money. He came to me, and I pitied him so, I asked him to stay a week or two till he got stronger. I told my wife what he needed most of anything was plenty of good victuals, and some lively company to make him have a jolly time. Dr. Lash told him to drink beer, but he won’t do it. His grandfather is growing poorer every day, and knowing that don’t make a man any pleasanter in his family. Mr. Brenner has been up to see about buying some timber of him, and I hope Mr. Brenner will get it. Stafford wants it, the same as he wants everything, but it will be put to a bad use if he gets it. It wouldn’t be right, and I don’t want to destroy anybody’s property, but if there was to be a fire in town, I know of one building that could be spared better than any other.”

CHAPTER XXX.

THE SALOON-KEEPER.

THE saloon door was thrown wide open, and a man called loudly :

“Scully, I wish to see you !”

“I am to be seen in my place of business,” replied the saloon-keeper, as he stepped from behind the bar. “Come in, Mr. Lunt.”

“Never. I will never cross the threshold of your place of business, unless to help clear it of its cursed contents. I have something to say to you.”

“Say on ; I can hear.”

“Then listen. I forbid your selling beer or tobacco to either of my boys. If I know of your doing it, I will prosecute and punish you to the full extent of the law. I will make this town so hot for you, you will be glad to leave it. You hear me, do you ?”

“I hear you, Mr. Lunt, and I advise you to keep your boys where you want them. I shall not go after them. I am here to keep a saloon and make what money I can out of it. It is none of my business to look after your boys.”

"You make it your business. If ever a man set himself to ruin the boys of a town, you are that man."

"I deny that charge. I am doing an honest business, and the people of the town sustain me in it."

"Not all the people sustain you. Many condemn and despise you."

"For all that, this is a free country, and the majority rule. The majority don't want to interfere with me. I know both sides of the story a good deal better than you do. It will be wasting words for you to talk to me."

A crowd had gathered around the saloon; among others there was Mr. Brenner, who wished to give his townsman the support of his presence, and who now said :

"Mr. Scully, it will be well for you to remember that you are here only on sufferance. There will come a day of reckoning, when your sins will confront you."

For once the saloon-keeper had no reply to make. His face flushed for a moment, and then was deathly pale. He reached out his hand as if to close the door, then turned away without doing so.

Stafford, who had heard the colloquy, did not care to interfere. Only a few days before he had met Mr. Brenner at Lyford's, where this

gentleman had anticipated him in the purchase of some lumber.

Mr. Brenner, Jacob Hill, Mrs. Byam, and her grandson were the members of the community he most feared. This he acknowledged to his father, while to himself he confessed that Tamson Brenner was his strongest opponent. He had his circle of friends and admirers, but when he saw George Hilliard welcomed to the society of those who gave him only the most formal recognition, he was deeply chagrined.

In all this, however, he had one great consolation. He was doing a most profitable business, backed by an association of brewers, bound to stand by each other and fight all fanatics who dared question their right to make and sell what they pleased, regardless of the interests of their patrons.

“A free country. No sumptuary laws.”

“Free country or not, we of this town will express our minds,” said Jacob Hill. “If any one will go with me, I will call at every house in town and talk up this matter.”

“Including Stafford’s Corner?” was asked in reply.

“Certainly. That would be the last place to leave out of the canvass. I should like some one younger to go with me.”

“Tamson Brenner would be a good associate.”

“Yes, but there are some places I should not like to have her visit, and there are some people I should not like to have her meet. If Thad Byam was here I would enlist him.”

Mrs. Byam said Thad was coming the next week to remain for several days. He had some new plans to carry out. His grandmother, too, had some new plans she wished his assistance in carrying out, yet no one but herself knew what they were.

As usual, when Thad Byam was expected, there was a large attendance at the weekly temperance meeting, and, strange to say, some habitual beer-drinkers were present. Why they had come was a mystery, but what they heard sent them to their homes in no enviable frame of mind. Thad Byam was the principal speaker of the evening, when he took occasion to state some facts in regard to brewers and distillers.

“Monopolists, the most selfish and the most aggressive of any class of men in the country; reckless of the good of the community; actually forcing their wares upon the people; they are making enormous fortunes out of the mechanics and laboring men of the community. They defy the temperance sentiment of the entire country. They are building breweries wherever they can obtain a foothold; professing—what?

"To furnish a temperance drink; to improve business; to provide a home market for the farmer's grain, and give employment to men who would otherwise be idle.

"Beer is *not* a temperance drink. I have seen men drunk on beer. A brewery does not improve the business of a town. A shoe-shop, or a shop for the manufacture of any article necessary to the comfort of a family, costing as much as Stafford's brewery, would employ ten times as many men, without tempting them to guzzle beer until they become cross and stupid.

"Think of boys twelve years of age going to school so stupefied with beer that they cannot sit erect in their seats!

"This is a small town, but we cannot afford to have a brewery here."

"But we have it. What can we do about it?"

"Boycott it," was replied promptly. "The brewery was sprung upon the town before the voters realized what it would be."

"The saloon came with it."

"Boycott that. If no one patronized the saloon it would soon be closed. Keep the boys away from it. Their souls are worth too much to be bartered for beer and tobacco. Don't go to the saloon."

"There isn't a boy here in the hall who ever goes to the saloon *now*."

This was said with so strong an emphasis upon the little adverb of time as to provoke a smile; but the next day, when it was reported to Scully, he declared with an oath that, if he could have his way, he would "have all the boys in town dead drunk within twenty-four hours." He would not dare make the least effort to accomplish this; knowing, as he did, that retribution would be sharp and sudden.

Clyde Stafford had often cautioned him against carrying matters with too high a hand, but Scully was beginning to feel himself master of the situation. The brewer had so often protested that he had no interest in the saloon, it was absurd for him to attempt anything like dictation in regard to its management.

Meanwhile the canvass of the town was begun at Lyford's, by Jacob Hill and Thad Byam.

"I've heard about this young man," said Mr. Lyford. "I used to see him when he was a boy. His grandma'am and my wife used to visit together when he was a boy. You've been lucky," he added, turning to Thaddeus Byam.

"I have been lucky enough to work hard, and save what I could of my earnings. I have earned all I could."

"Folks say you've got a long head-piece. The Lord makes a difference in folks, and I

can't help thinking He'll remember that when we get through. Some grow richer and some grow poorer."

"There is generally some reason for the difference in people," said Mr. Hill. "It isn't all the Lord's doings, and it isn't all luck. A good deal depends on ourselves."

"Yes, yes; I know what's coming. Now I am old and feeble, you want me to give up drinking what I've always been used to, and I can't do it. I can't, and it's no use talking about it. Jackman came up here and made me a generous offer, but I wouldn't take the money he got from Stafford for my barley.

"I sold some timber to Mr. Brenner, and I brought some things into the house that will make us more comfortable, but I must have my liquor. My father drank before me, and his father before him, and so back I don't know how far. My boy drank. It hurt me to see him, but I couldn't say much. There's Warren and Sallie; they mean to stick to cold water, and I hope they will, but it's too late for me."

"But about voting. Will you vote with us at the next meeting?"

"Tell me how you want me to vote, and I am your man. If my vote will do you any good, you shall have it."

This promise was something gained for their

cause, and the two men left the mountain encouraged to persevere in their canvass.

Most of the calls made were short. Where the people were in sympathy with them, questions were quickly answered. Where there was violent opposition they did not waste their words. Every house was visited; the result of these visits being more favorable than they had dared to hope.

Contrary to their expectations, they were courteously received at Stafford's Corner; some of the tenants acknowledging that they were injuring themselves by their beer-drinking habits, and professing themselves willing to vote for any measure calculated to advance the cause of temperance.

"Scully is a wretch," said a woman who was doing her best to bring up her children with a hatred for all intoxicating drinks. "He tries all ways to draw in the boys and young men. A good many of the older ones don't need any coaxing.

"Some of us women have been talking it over, and we have made up our minds to save our children if we can. If we can't do it here with our husbands, we are going away by ourselves. We must save our children. I know marrying is for life, but a woman has a duty to her children.

“Mr. Dunning has been down here and talked to us, and the new doctor just goes through the Corner preaching against beer. We have had tracts to read too, and the children read them to each other.

“There ain’t anything else makes Stafford so mad as to see those tracts. I don’t know who sends them, but I hope they’ll keep coming.”

CHAPTER XXXI.

WARNED.

AND keep coming they did until "the town was flooded with temperance literature." Tracts and leaflets were mailed to every family in town, scattered broadcast and posted in conspicuous places; so that the attention of the community could not fail to be arrested.

To be sure, many were twisted into lighters for cigars and pipes; the smokers thus expressing their contempt for "such rubbish," yet for the moment they were obliged to think of temperance.

Stafford complained that there was an attempt to ruin his business; but as he had no clue to the offender, his threats of punishment availed nothing.

One morning the entire front of the saloon was covered with posters denouncing the use of beer, and branding it as a vile concoction, of which alcohol formed a component part, and which, with dirty water from decayed grain, was sold at an enormous gain to the producer and a corresponding loss to the consumer.

No better way could have been devised to bring the subject before the people. Even the patrons of the saloon considered it "a good joke." As the posters were torn down, one after another, they were seized by the bystanders, and because of the very difficulty of matching the irregular bits, they were read and discussed at leisure.

Scully said little, although he ground his teeth in impotent rage. He controlled himself so far, that beyond a muttered oath, he gave no expression to his anger.

As for Stafford, he made no attempt to curb either his indignation or its expression. The scoundrel who had so insulted him and defamed his beer "deserved imprisonment for life. No person with any claim to be considered respectable and law-abiding but would condemn such an outrage."

"I have no idea who deserves the credit of papering the saloon, but it was the best job that has been done for our side, and the hardest blow Stafford has had," said Jacob Hill, when speaking of the affair.

"If hard blows would drive his brewery out of town, it would be a blessed thing for us all," replied Luke Brenner.

"And as he can't be driven out of town at present, the next best thing is to do all we can

to weaken his influence. If we can carry our point at town meeting we shall make a great gain, and I believe we shall have everything our own way."

"Of course Byam has faith or he would not have purchased the property he hopes to improve. It is bought and the price paid. Stafford will regard that transaction as another blow aimed at him."

"Thank God for every blow. He isn't carrying things with quite so high a hand as he calculated. It will be a grand thing for the town to have Thad Byam here. He is a host in himself, and the fact that he has worked his way up to his present position is an object-lesson for all our young people."

"That is true. I overheard Dolf Turner talking with Ann, and telling her what he intended to do when he should be a man. He made frequent reference to Mr. Byam, who used to be poor as anybody."

"Thad has done well; and one good thing about him, he has not outgrown his grandmother's cottage. He has forgotten none of his old friends. It was a great thing to speak the words which saved him, as he says you did."

"It was only a word spoken in season, Jacob. The Lord added His blessing, and we have Thaddeus Byam, the inventor and Christian worker.

He in turn saved Tim Durrell, and so the work goes on. He has paid me a thousand times for all I did for him."

"He does not think so."

"I know he does not; but it was through his influence that Stafford was paid. Mr. Anslow would hardly have come to me with the money."

"He will be repaid, Cousin Luke."

"Every dollar. We shall make quite a respectable payment this year. Mr. Hilliard is paying me slowly on his debt, and George takes only enough of his wages to meet his expenses, which he makes as light as possible. So they are gaining as well as we.

"I feel as though I had taken a new lease of life, and sometimes I think I may work twenty years longer. At any rate, I shall do all I can. I am surprised to find how much I enjoy my work, and my wife says she is happier than she ever was before in her life. Tamson is happy too. We have been successful in everything we have undertaken. Our lumber has sold for a high price, and there is more to follow.

"George Hilliard is to be trusted. I trust both his honesty and ability. He has a remarkable power of influencing others. Not a man at work with him but would follow wherever he might lead."

"What of the stranger you told me who came

to you acknowledging he had been so desperate as to be tempted to commit suicide?"

"He is one of the best men we have, but I know no more of his history than he told me the first time I saw him. I don't even know his name. He said he wished to be called Sargent, and his wishes have been regarded. If any one, in speaking to him, prefixes Mr., he does not reply."

"Is he a good worker?"

"He is diligent and faithful, but it is plain to be seen that he is not used to hard work. Dolf Turner has come nearer than any one else to gaining his confidence. Dolf is getting quite ambitious, and having some trouble with his lessons, asked Sargent to help him. This Sargent did, and at the same time made some allusion to his own school days.

"He sleeps in a chamber over the shed at Mrs. Turner's, where he spends all his evenings. He never stays with the family except when he is eating, but Dolf presumed to go to his room; so they have become fast friends. He reads everything that comes in his way, and often when he hears some subject discussed, he betrays his interest by the expression of his face, yet never volunteers a remark. When he first came I should not have been surprised if he had left at any time; now I regard him as a fixture."

"I wish he could vote. I tell you, Cousin Luke, I am almost ready to buy votes for our side. Stafford will control every vote he can, and do all in his power to prevent a new business being exempt from taxation."

"I understand Thad Byam will speak for that, and if there is likely to be much opposition, he will tell the people some plain truths. If it should be a pleasant day, we shall have such a meeting as this town has never seen. You did a good work in your canvass."

"I hope it will prove so. If some of the voters do not play me false, we shall have a fair majority on our side. Scully's saloon is to be headquarters for the opposition. There will be free liquor for all who will drink, and money for men who have votes to sell."

The next day after the above conversation between the cousins, Sargent asked Mr. Brenner for a private interview, which being granted, he said:

"From what I have heard, I judge that at your coming town meeting some questions of importance are to be decided, and it is feared that Scully, the saloon-keeper, will use his influence on the wrong side."

"All that is true," replied Mr. Brenner.

"You may think me interfering with what does not concern me, sir, but I have it in my

power to silence Scully so he will not dare express an opinion in regard to the questions at issue. I can drive him from the town, if that is desired."

"How can you do that?"

"By telling what I know of him and what he will not dare to deny. I know enough to send him to prison for a term of years. He is out now on leave, and has done more than enough to forfeit his liberty. It is not strange if you doubt the truth of what I am saying, but if you or Mr. Hilliard would go with me, I would demand an interview with him, when you could see for yourselves what effect my accusations would have on him. I should hardly dare to meet him alone. He would hesitate at nothing to accomplish his purpose. I have never seen Mr. Stafford; but from what I have heard of him, I wonder at his being in any way concerned with Scully Brown, who is not only unprincipled and unscrupulous, but coarse and ignorant."

"Is his name Scully Brown?"

"Yes, sir, but he chooses to shorten it. He does not do it, however, to shield his family from disgrace, as so many others are doing."

"Yourself among the number."

"Yes, sir; I confess to that."

"Some one may be anxious about you."

"Better anxiety than disgrace. I have brought myself to my present condition ; to a worse condition than the present. I have now—thanks to you—a chance to earn an honest living. A man like you can never know what such a chance has been to me. I have done my best."

"I believe you. You have had my sympathy through it all, and I have wished I could do more for you."

"It has been enough for me to feel that I had your sympathy. It has saved me when I have been ready to despair. Now I wish to help you, and I have thought I could do it by silencing Scully."

"You can. Unless silenced, he will do all he can against us. If you do not wish to meet him, write to him, and I will see that he receives the message."

"That will be a better way, and I will put the letter into your hands to-morrow morning."

This was done, and before night the saloon-keeper read the words of accusation and warning, written in the lonely chamber where a repentant man struggled against the appetite which would drag him back to sin and shame.

CHAPTER XXXII.

WAS IT AN ACCIDENT?

"It is going to be a hard fight, and we shall need every vote we can command," said Stafford to the saloon-keeper. "If Byam is allowed to set up business here——"

"Byam will be allowed to do anything he wants to," responded Scully, interrupting his companion. "He has the town at his back."

"Not the whole of it."

"Enough to carry any vote that will benefit him. It is hard work to fight him, and for my part I am about ready to leave."

"Ready to leave! Your contract was for three years, and I shall hold you to it. It will be for your interest to act on the square with me. I have been fair with you, Scully. I knew what you were and what you had to fear. You have no reason to complain that I have played you false in anything. I put you in a way of earning an honest living, when a word from me would have sent you back to your old quarters."

Scully was cowed. Turn which way he would he was treading on dangerous ground. There

was no signature to the letter which had recalled to him so much of his past life, yet he well knew who was the writer. He cared no more for Stafford than for the man called Sargent; but the former had a certain amount of influence in some quarters which might serve him in time of need. He was expected to influence votes; at the same time he was told that his only safety was in absolute silence on all public questions. Small wonder then that he was tempted to commit a crime to hide other crimes.

One night Sargent did not return to his boarding-place. Supper waited for him in vain. Dolf Turner went several times to his chamber, but he was not there. The next morning the boy went early to Mr. Brenner's with the news.

"Sargent didn't come home last night, and I've been hunting for him ever so long this morning. I got up before it was much light, and I've been all through the woods, but I can't find him anywhere. Sometimes he sits down on the bench and gets to thinking, so he forgets how late it is, but I don't believe he did that last night."

"Perhaps he has gone away without saying good-bye," responded Mr. Brenner.

"I don't believe he has. When I was up in his room evening before last, we made lots

of plans about what we are going to do next summer. He said he should stay 'round here as long as he could get work to do, because he wanted to be with Christians; and, Mr. Brenner, when a man prays every night right from his heart, isn't he a Christian?"

"He would not be likely to pray every night right from his heart, unless he was a Christian."

"Sargent prays so every night. I have heard him lots of times, and he always ends with: 'Help me, Lord, for Christ's sake!' Don't that mean that he's a Christian?"

"I think it does, Dolf."

"So do I, Mr. Brenner, and I want to find him. I *must* find him."

"Does Mr. Hilliard know about it?"

"Yes, sir; I told him, and he said he would look for Sargent. He told me not to tell anybody but you about it, and I haven't. Mother knows, because she couldn't help it."

George Hilliard was already searching along the bank of the river, when Dolf Turner bounded past him, and was soon out of sight. Hurrying on, looking into every clump of bushes, and peering sharply into the water, he came at last to where a bank of rock and gravel overhung the river. Under that shelf he saw his friend lying as if dead.

The man could only be reached by going

quite a long distance further, and then coming back on so narrow a foothold, a single misstep would plunge one into the swollen waters.

"Did you fall?" asked the boy, literally panting for breath, as he stood by his friend. "What can I do for you? Can you stand on your feet?"

"I cannot help myself at all," was replied. "I am chilled through. One leg is broken, and I am bruised from head to foot."

The suffering man could say no more. He had quite exhausted his strength in the effort he had made.

"I'll bring somebody to help you just as quick as I can," said Dolf; and as he afterward told his mother, he ran faster than he ever did before in his life until he met Mr. Hilliard, who sent him to Mr. Brenner, who would know what to do.

It was with great difficulty that Sargent was rescued from his perilous position; and when laid upon the bank his sufferings were so intense it seemed hardly possible that he could endure being moved to his boarding-place. Dr. Nute was summoned, who gave him a restorative, and superintended his removal, which was accomplished quickly and carefully.

The best room in the cottage had been made ready for him. The fractured limb received attention, and his bruises were examined.

"You must have had a hard fall," said the doctor.

"Yes, sir," was replied.

"The wonder is that you did not take enough of the bank with you to bury you, or fall so far over as to go into the water. In either event you would have been killed, while now, good care, time, and patience will bring you out all right."

To these remarks Sargent made no response, and soon after, under the influence of an opiate, he was resting as comfortably as was possible under the circumstances.

"The man will need constant care," said the doctor to George Hilliard. "He was so chilled, it is impossible yet to tell how badly he is hurt. Is it possible that he was intoxicated?"

"It is not possible. I saw him when we quit work last evening, and he was all right. He has a habit of sometimes wandering off by himself after his day's work is done, and he says at such times that he does not care for any supper."

"If that was the case with him last evening, he must have been too much absorbed in thought to notice where he was, or he never would have gone so near the edge of a bank ready to fall at any moment. He had a narrow escape."

Most of the villagers knew every man em-

ployed on the Brenner place, and more than ordinary interest had been felt in Sargent, who had come among them a stranger, and who so persistently avoided all intercourse with any one, except Dolf Turner and his fellow-workmen; intercourse with the latter being restricted to the most commonplace matters. Of course, the fact that he had been found so seriously injured caused much comment; some protesting that no sober man could have met with such an accident.

"It is a wonder he hadn't died where he was," remarked one. "He might have shouted as long as he had strength, and the chances would be against anybody hearing him; but set Dolf Turner on a hunt, and no matter what he is after, he'll get it. He is a smart boy, and Tamson Brenner will see that he keeps on the right track."

The next report in which the people were generally interested was that Scully had been seen walking hurriedly down the railroad track, carrying a large valise, and evidently wishing to avoid recognition.

"I hope he will never come back. We have had enough of him," was the general expression of relief at his departure, although Stafford could not conceal his annoyance at the desertion of one upon whom he had counted as a faithful ally.

A young man who had sometimes assisted Scully, kept the saloon open during the day and evening, but he had no authority for doing so.

"Now Stafford must show his hand," said Jacob Hill, who was frequently in the village, looking after various interests in which he was concerned. "Either he must come forward as the real proprietor, or the saloon must be closed. We shall see which will be done."

For two days the saloon remained closed; after which it was opened by a stranger, who stood in the doorway waiting for customers, when Thad Byam saw him and exclaimed:

"Grimes, you here! What are you about in that hole? Come out of there. Where are your wife and children? How came you in such a place? Come out into the free air. I want to talk with you."

The man obeyed, without answering one of the questions thus hurled at him, and when fairly away from the saloon, his companion asked:

"Who hired you to come here?"

"Stafford," was the quick reply.

"And you would stoop so low as to sell beer and whiskey, when you could earn a good living for your family by doing honorable work. Leave that saloon and I will find work for you. We are fighting beer and whiskey with all our might here, and we want your help.

"Tell me about Will, the brightest little fellow I know; and Ruth, the dear little girl, any man might be proud to call his daughter. They deserve to be loved and cared for by somebody better than a rumseller. Why, Grimes, you must be crazy to think of going into that saloon. Tell me about it. Have you taken to drinking again?"

"Not a drop, Byam. I haven't broken my pledge, and I don't mean to."

"Do you expect you can measure out liquor and see other men drink it, and not drink it yourself? Why, man, you can't do it. But how came you here, anyway? There must be something wrong somewhere. Tell me what it is!"

"There was a strike, and I had to come out with the rest. I didn't want to, but there was no help for it."

"No help for it! Don't you own yourself? Haven't you a right to earn your living?"

"But, Byam——"

"I know all about it, and I wonder any sensible man can tolerate such tyranny. I had only my head and my hands when I started, and I kept them for my own use. I didn't hold out my hands for somebody to bind and hold at his pleasure. But you haven't told me yet why you came here."

"I came because it was the only opening for me. Of course I shouldn't be allowed to work at my trade except under certain restrictions, and I must do something."

"Did your wife know what your business would be here?"

"No; I didn't tell her. It might have made her feel bad."

"Well, now, decide. I will give you work at your trade, and pay you the same wages you have been receiving, if you will promise me that the bargain shall be between you and me alone. Stafford and I are working against each other, and I intend to win."

"If you don't, it will be the first time you didn't carry your point. I'll swear off from Stafford and work for you."

"All right; but remember there can be no go-betweens. One master is enough for any man."

At that moment Stafford appeared, and was informed by Grimes of the change in his plans.

"I suppose I may thank you for this," said the brewer, turning to Thad Byam.

"I don't care for thanks, but I do care for the assurance I have just received that Clyde Stafford is the owner of the only liquor-saloon in town," was the cool reply. "It has been often denied, but further denial will be useless. Come, Grimes, let us be going."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A TOWN MEETING.

It was a busy winter, yet among the workers there was an eager expectancy of something better in the near future. The saloon was doing its work under certain restrictions imposed by public sentiment, but it was hoped that in the spring a stronger public sentiment would develop more active opposition. In fact, everybody was looking forward to "town meeting" as a crisis in affairs; and when at last came the appointed day, with weather all which could be desired, every voter able to stand upon his feet was out. The expected speech was made; the vote was passed, and all business carried on by Thaddeus Byam & Co. was exempted from taxation for ten years. When this vote was declared a grand cheer attested the favor with which it was received.

On that day the temperance women of the town provided lunch at a merely nominal price for all who were disposed to patronize them. There was, therefore, no excuse for going to the saloon, whose doors stood invitingly open. Beer

was on tap for the thirsty free as water from the spring, but the result was not what had been anticipated.

"The town is coming to its senses," said Jacob Hill. "This day's work will tell. Thad will show us what he can do, and I believe he has been raised up for the express purpose of holding Stafford in check. Some of Stafford's own men voted against him. He is going to make money. There can't anybody prevent that, but he can't run the town just to suit himself."

As there had been two parties, so now there were those who deplored such a state of things, and, forgetting how the vote for the brewery had been carried, condemned the action which had given so much to one man.

But whatever might be said, it was soon proved that many were to be benefited. Work began at once. A large building was to be erected as a workshop which would employ a hundred men. Houses were to be built for these men, and, in fact, plans were already made which, if carried out, would give the town another and larger village than that which had so long been the centre of its small trade.

There was work for everybody willing to be employed, and a demand for lumber requiring increased facilities for its preparation.

Mrs. Byam regarded her grandson with undisguised astonishment. She "could not understand how Thad could carry so much in his head without getting things all mixed up." She was never tired of talking about him and praising him for his kindness to her; "a poor old woman some folks would be ashamed of."

"Rushing as usual," remarked George Hiliard to Thaddeus Byam, as they met one evening in the early summer.

"The world is rushing, and who would succeed must rush with it," was replied. "When I was living in a garret, and often satisfying my hunger with bread and water, I thought of outdoor work as mere play. Now things are moving along at our corner about fast enough to suit me. We could set a few more men of the right sort to work, and I expect they will make their appearance before long. We have only sober men."

"You are running an opposition to the saloon."

"Yes; we are trying to do that. Our room is unfinished, and not so well lighted as we would like, but it is clean and whole. Our tables are made of pine boards planed and matched, but they are covered with papers and magazines for all who care to read. Then we have tables for games, and every evening we have some general entertainment—speaking,

singing, or playing. We have some good singers and players. Last evening we contributed all 'round, and had a little treat of lemonade and cakes. That would look childish to some people, but we enjoyed it. We are about organizing a debating club, and promise ourselves both amusement and improvement."

"You have a good-looking set of men."

"Most men will look well enough if they keep themselves morally and physically clean. A kind heart, clear conscience, and a cheerful disposition will make almost any face attractive."

"You are right about that, Byam. It is astonishing, too, how quickly a change in one's life for the better will improve a face that has become coarse and besotted. There is Sargent. I have been watching him ever since he came among us, and it has seemed to me his face was going back to what it was originally. Now, after his long confinement it is clear-cut and delicate.

"I wish he would give me his confidence, so that I could communicate with his friends, but his lips are as tightly closed as ever when any allusion is made to his past life. He is anxious to be at work, and yesterday he asked me if I thought you could give him some light employment by which he could earn enough to pay his board, and perhaps save a little toward

paying his debts. He says he wishes to stay here in town, and I hope he can. We have given him what work we could through the winter, such as he could do in-doors, but now he is stronger."

"I am glad to hear that. There are all kinds of work to be done at our corner, and it would be strange if we couldn't find a place for him. I will see him in a few days and see what can be done for him."

"A man terribly out of place," was Thaddeus Byam's decision as he talked with Sargent, becoming more and more interested as their acquaintance progressed.

Not long after Sargent was seen among the workmen at Byam's Corner, quick to learn what was required of him, and impressing his companions favorably. At first he did not enter the club-room; but having been persuaded on one occasion to do so, he seemed for the time to forget himself, and joined in the singing. Then he was asked to sing alone, which he did, while those about him listened spellbound, and his own eyes filled with tears. The moment he ceased singing he rushed from the room, and was not seen again until morning, when he was silent as usual. There was little talking by any through the day. Every energy was bent to the accomplishment of the work in hand. Build-

ings rose as if by magic. Extra wages were paid for work over-time. Dwelling-houses were occupied as soon as they provided shelter from the weather, while one room after another was finished, so offering constantly improved accommodations.

There was hurry and bustle. Orders were given promptly and as promptly obeyed. A new impetus was given to business, which was felt to the most remote corner of the town. There was a demand for farm products of all kinds, so that the poorest might avail themselves of this market.

Byam's Corner, as it was already called, was the best site for business within a radius of five miles. It was the very spot Stafford had chosen for his brewery, but the owners of the land refused to sell to him.

At a little distance, on a moderate elevation, was a large, old-fashioned house, which, with the grounds around it, the brewer had also vainly coveted. For several years this house had been open during the summer for the entertainment of transient guests, as well as for those who desired to spend some weeks in so pleasant a home. This house now furnished accommodations for those who were superintending the work which every day developed larger proportions.

"Thad, when and where do you propose to stop?" asked Jacob Hill as he surveyed the busy scene.

"I cannot tell you," was replied. "When we began I thought I knew all about it; but something new keeps turning up, until now I am waiting to see what will come next. I wish we could buy the Crockett place, but Mrs. Crockett is too wise to sell."

"Then you think she is wise to keep the place."

"Certainly I do. In ten years somebody will be willing to give her twice as much for it as we could afford to pay now. Property is going up in this part of the town. The men who have started with us are going to stay, and we shall have some fine houses to show as the result of our prosperity."

"You have no doubt that you will be prospered."

"Not a doubt, Mr. Hill. We know what we propose to do, and we are sure that we know how to do it."

"Your invention comes in play here."

"Yes, sir, it does, and it will count large for me."

"Tim Durrell is one of your foremen."

"Yes, sir, and for the place he fills we could not have a better man. He is honest and faith-

ful, ready to obey orders, and devoted to the interests of the company. I could hardly spare him."

"You have made him what he is. How about the other two?"

"There is not much encouraging about them. Stafford seems to have them completely under control. I suppose you know they voted against us."

"I knew they did, and I heard they were paid for it."

"I heard they were paid in beer, but judging from their appearance that evening, I think they must have had something stronger than beer. Tim has tried to influence them, but he soon found it was of no use. They threatened to pour some whiskey down his throat, and said if Scully was in the saloon they would soon settle him."

"Stafford would like nothing better than to get some of our men into his saloon. If such a thing should happen I should go there after them, and I should take them away, even if Stafford was there himself."

"You would not be likely to find him there."

"Perhaps not, although now that he has virtually acknowledged himself to be the proprietor, he will be less careful about being seen there. I took Grimes away from him, and he has an added grudge against me for that."

"I heard about that. Is Grimes at work for you?"

"Yes; and his wife and children are here. He is a good-hearted man, as the world goes; but he is easily discouraged, and doesn't always stand up for what he knows to be right."

"There is Sargent. It was always a mystery to me how he could tumble off the bank as he did."

"It is no mystery to me, Mr. Hill. I never asked Sargent about it, and I don't suppose he would tell me if I did, but I have my own opinion."

"Scully left the day he was found."

"Yes, sir, and he left in a hurry."

"That was one of the strange things that have happened in town. I suppose you are interested in Mr. Anslow's protégé."

"Yes, sir; we are expecting him here soon. He is anxious to be at work, and his health is so much improved, Mr. Anslow thinks it may be as well for him."

"He has worked with Mr. Hilliard."

"He did no hard work. Mr. Anslow furnished money to pay his wages, so that he might feel he was earning something."

"Mr. Anslow is a rare man. People are just beginning to appreciate him and his sister. Wife and I made them a visit, not a great while

ago, and we found them different from what we expected. We went over to the old Joyce house, too, and saw Mr. Haver and his children. They seem to be doing well."

"They are, thanks to Mr. Anslow and Miss Anslow."

"Well, Thad, you'll think I'm putting you through quite a catechism; but I want to know a little more about the man you call Sargent. Is he a good deal above the work he is doing here?"

"We are doing honest work, Mr. Hill, and honest work degrades no one, but I feel sure that Sargent has had a different training from the rest of us, although he is careful not to display his acquirements. Sometime there will be a revelation in regard to him."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

ROBERT TREVANION.

“FATHER! Father!”

The door was thrown open and a handsome, well-dressed lad bounded into the club-room. Every eye was fixed upon the intruder, as he made his way straight to Sargent, who a moment before had been singing, but was now silent and deathly pale.

“Oh, father, I have found you at last, and I shall never let you go away from me again. Speak to me, father. Speak to your Rob.”

Still the man remained silent and motionless, as if suddenly smitten with paralysis. Not even when the boy's arms were around his neck and warm kisses were pressed upon his lips, did he give any sign that he had heard the appeal.

“Sargent, what does this mean?” asked one of his companions.

“Why do you call my father Sargent?” exclaimed the boy. “His name is Mr. Robert Trevanion.”

This name broke the spell, and clasping his boy to his heart, he wept as only strong men can weep.

“Don't cry, father. Don't cry. Mother and

Sue are at the hotel, and I know they will be glad to see you. Grandfather is coming to-morrow; but I shall stay with you, no matter what he says. I am going to do just as you tell me."

Then the father found his voice and said :

"Rob, my boy, will you go outside and leave me here for five minutes? I will come to you in five minutes."

"Sure, father?"

"Sure, my son."

The boy took out an elegant gold watch, looked carefully at the time, and then, without another word, left the room.

"Gentlemen, friends, for such I regard you, I did not intend to make to you the confession now forced upon me. My name is Robert Trevanion. The boy who claimed me as his father is my son. His mother is my wife. I became a drunkard. I spent my fortune, and then I abandoned my family to save them from further disgrace. If I was away, my children and my wife would find a luxurious home with her father.

"I came to this town, destitute and desperate. How I have lived since then I think you know, but only God knows what it has cost me to live as I have. I thank you for your kindness."

Short and concise was this explanation, and

before five minutes had expired, he was with his son, who said quickly:

"Now come to mother."

"I cannot go to your mother. She would not wish to see me. You cannot understand, my boy, but——"

"I do understand, father. I know what made you go away and leave us. I kept asking mother, and she told me. You drank too much wine and brandy, and spent all your money, so you didn't take care of us. But you are good now. I know you are, and if you won't come with me, I shall go alone and tell mother I have found you. I heard you singing, and I knew there wasn't anybody else could sing so. Won't you come to mother?"

"No, Rob, it would not be best, and perhaps it would be better not to tell her that you have seen me."

"I can't help telling her, father, because I am going to stay with you. A boy belongs with his father, if his father is good. I think girls belong with their fathers, too."

Thad Byam, who had not been in the club-room while the strange disclosure was made, now came up when the man he had known as Sargent said in a husky voice:

"Mr. Byam, allow me to introduce to you my son, Rob Trevanion."

The introduction was acknowledged, and the boy cordially recognized. Then turning to the father with :

“And you?”

“I am Robert Trevanion, at your service,” was replied.

“I am happy to make the acquaintance of Mr. Trevanion.”

“I did not expect to answer to that name again. I thought I was safe from recognition by any one who had known me before I became Sargent, but my son found me and I could not disown him. You have treated me generously, Mr. Byam, and I thank you for it. I cannot tell what is before me, but wherever I am, I shall remember with the deepest gratitude those who befriended me in my hour of greatest need.”

The two men talked together until, judging best to leave his companion alone, the younger said with a hearty hand-clasp, “You have my best wishes,” and entered the club-room, where was a low murmur of conversation.

“If the lady who came to the hotel this afternoon is Sargent’s wife, he must have been used to a very different life from what he has lived since he came here,” remarked one. “She is a splendid-looking woman, richly dressed, and with the air of fine breeding in every motion.

Of course, I only saw her on the veranda with her children, but it needs only a glance to judge of such a woman."

At that moment the woman thus described was pacing her room and wringing her hands, while her boy endeavored to keep step with her, as he entreated her to see his father; closing each appeal with the assertion:

"I am going to stay with him, and I don't mean ever to leave him again."

"Tell him to come. I will see him," she said at last, when unable longer to resist the pleadings which had so moved her.

Quick to deliver the message, the boy sped down the hill, and taking his father's hand, walked to the hotel without speaking.

Such a meeting! A man coarsely clad, who for three years had been dead to his family; who had gone down into the lowest depths, and endured such privations as he shuddered to recall. This man stood in the presence of a handsome, elegantly-dressed woman, whom in happier days he had wooed for his wife and brought to his home of luxury and ease. He stood before her now without uttering a word, or so much as raising his eyes to her face.

At last she broke the silence.

"Robert."

"Mildred."

There was another silence, broken again by the woman.

"Robert, have you nothing to say to me?"

"What can I say?" he responded. "I am not worthy to speak to you. I might ask your forgiveness for the disgrace I have brought upon you and your children, but——"

"They are your children too, Robert, and yet you will not even look at me."

"Look at you! I dare not. Don't tempt me too far, or I shall forget——"

"Forget that you once loved me, Robert?"

"Once loved you! I love you now, and because I love you, I must leave you."

"Leave me! I cannot, will not live with a drunkard. I loathe the very sight and smell of all liquors; but give them up, and I will go with you to the ends of the earth. Anywhere, Robert, if you will only love me, and——"

For answer to this he caught her in his arms, raining kisses upon her face until he could better control himself. Then, leading her to a seat, while his arms still encircled her, he said:

"Not a drop of alcoholic liquor has passed my lips for a year, and I would sooner die than taste it; but I am a poor man, and you are not used to poverty. I have found friends who have helped me, but I have worked like any laborer. You could not live as I must. It

would be a sin to take you from your father's house to such a home as I could give you."

"It would be a greater sin for you to leave me again. I could not bear it. I trust you; I love you, my husband."

These last words were whispered, but they reached the heart of the listener, whose every pulse thrilled with new hope and happiness.

All unconscious of the lapse of time, until the children, who had become impatient at their long banishment, rapped on the door of the room, asking for admittance.

"Come in," said their mother, and there was a family reunion such as is seldom seen.

Later, they separated; Robert Trevanion going to his boarding-place, and the next morning appearing among the workmen, who could not but regard him curiously. Rob came to him early and remained until noon, seeming content only to watch him at his work.

Mr. Esterbrook, Mrs. Trevanion's father, arrived at the hotel in the afternoon, when there ensued a stormy scene between himself and his daughter, who informed him that she had seen her husband, and they had become reconciled to each other.

"He knows that you have money and hopes you will be ready to support him in idleness," said the angry father. "It was an insult for

him to ask you to live with him again as his wife."

"He did not ask me. I believe he has reformed. He told me that he was trying to lead a Christian life, and I believe him. In his worst days he never told me a falsehood when he was sober. He would not do it now. I offered to live with him. He thinks so badly of himself he would not have asked me, but if he will take me I shall go with him. He does not know that I have money. He thinks me dependent upon you."

"What if I find, upon inquiry, that he is still a drunkard and unworthy of confidence?"

"Then I will go with you, father, and never see him again. I will not see him, either, until you are satisfied about him."

"It will take time to make all the inquiries I wish."

"That does not matter. I have waited three years. What signify a few hours or days now? Rob protests that, come what will, he shall stay with his father."

"We will see," said Mr. Esterbrook, and went out with the avowed purpose to investigate the character of his son-in-law.

He returned presently, but he did not see his daughter until they met at the supper-table, when neither made any allusion to the subject

in which both were so deeply interested. At length, however, the gentleman asked:

"Where is Rob?"

"With his father," was replied.

Later, Mr. Esterbrook said to his daughter:

"I decided not to make any inquiries in regard to your husband. It would be beneath me to do it. You must choose for yourself; only if you choose to remain with Robert Trevanion, you must not expect me again to offer you a home when he deserts you."

"I choose to remain with my husband and abide the consequences," replied Mrs. Trevanion. "I owe you much, father. I love you, and I shall never cease to be grateful for your kindness, but I must go with my husband. He has the stronger claim upon me."

"Then go to him," responded the proud man. "Go to him, but do not expect me to acknowledge him."

CHAPTER XXXV.

TEN YEARS.

A BASKET picnic in the new workshop at Byam's Corner, with everybody invited ; and it really seemed that everybody except the brewer and his especial friends accepted the invitation. They sneeringly called it a temperance meeting, and it is doubtful if any meeting before or since that time did more to strengthen and encourage the temperance sentiment of the town.

The dinner, to which every basket contributed, was bountiful in quantity and perfect in quality. After dinner, there were short speeches and singing; singing of the grand old hymns, in which the oldest could join ; so renewing their youth, and bringing tears to eyes long unused to weep.

The prayer by Rev. Mr. Dunning, preceding the dinner, and the benediction pronounced by him as the company was about to separate, was a happy reminder of their dependence upon an Almighty power.

"I wish it wa'n't too late for me to come in with the rest," said old Jerry Lyford, who, with his wife and granddaughter, had been brought

to the picnic. "I'm glad I come. It's done me good to see how the young folks are coming on, but it's too late for me. Warren's going to be different from the rest of the Lyfords, and I thank God for it. We shouldn't come to-day, anyway, if he hadn't said so much about it the last time he was up home. We old folks are like——"

"Like old benches needing new props," said Mr. Brenner, who would never forget the lesson he had learned under the lindens; and who now interrupted his companion, that he might give a more cheerful tone to the conversation. "Now we have the props, we can stand firm again."

"You can, Mr. Brenner, but I am too shaky to stand firm, props or no props. I voted for this business, 'though I was offered money to vote on the other side. I'm glad I did."

"So am I, Mr. Lyford. Every vote cast for this business was a vote for the best interests of the town, and for the benefit of every person in it."

"I guess you're right there, Mr. Brenner. Wife and I expect to be a good deal better off next winter than we have been before for years. You see we've raised something to sell, and the money'll be spent for something that's really needed in the house."

Mr. Lyford had improved, notwithstanding his repeated assertion that it was too late for him to change. Others, too, who would not have acknowledged it, were yielding to the influence prompting them to better living.

Moving around among the people who had gathered on this festive occasion, some whom he had long known, and some whose acquaintance he made for the first time, Mr. Brenner had a pleasant word for each and all. Mrs. Brenner and her daughter were present, winning for themselves a host of friends, and contributing largely to the success of the day. It was a general holiday for many who seldom escaped from the dull routine of a too prosaic life.

"Now for work," was Thad Byam's ringing call the next morning, and every man responded with a will. Machinery was put in place by skillful hands, and it was not long before everything was in good working order; yet more was planned for another year.

The club-room was finished, and arrangements perfected for proper heating and lighting. Upon the table was a greater variety of literature; several new publications being a gift from Robert Trevanion, who, although far away, thus proved his grateful remembrance of kindness received. Over the door opening into the club-room were the words: "Welcome to

all. Come in"; and many who but for this would have felt their presence an intrusion, availed themselves of the privilege.

"It is like going from midnight darkness into the brightest daylight, to go from Stafford's saloon into the club-room at Byam's Corner," said a young man who spoke from experience. "One place is foul with all manner of uncleanness, while the other is sweet and clean. One drags you down, while the other helps you up; and for my part I have done with the saloon."

In the early winter Tamson Brenner opened a temperance school, to which all under fifteen years of age were invited. At this announcement there was a general buzz of excitement among the children at Stafford's Corner, as well as in all other parts of the town. They were going. They liked Miss Brenner, and considered it an honor to be associated with her in any capacity. Moreover, they had read the tracts and leaflets which still continued coming, and were ready at any time to express their dislike of beer and tobacco.

So Stafford saw these children file past his office every week on their way to the temperance school; knowing as he did that every lesson learned there would be a condemnation of his business. He would have made an effort

to prevent this, had he not known that such an effort would increase his unpopularity, while utterly failing of its purpose.

The contrast between his corner and Byam's Corner was so great the most careless observer remarked it. He was doing a profitable business, but there were times when he would willingly have sacrificed something of these profits for the social recognition accorded Thaddeus Byam and George Hilliard.

None knew better than himself that he was losing favor in the community. Now there was a home market for fruit and vegetables, farmers cared less for raising barley. Mr. Brenner's success stimulated others, and Stafford feared that the spring would bring with it increased activity on the part of those he counted his enemies.

This fear was realized, although little was said openly against his business; it being at that time the policy of those opposed to it to show the people a better way of living than sacrificing their own interests to enrich one who had come among them a stranger, demanding such sacrifice.

By vote of the town other industries were exempt from taxation; all to be located so near to Byam's Corner as eventually to be included in the same village.

"Stafford is being checkmated," said Jacob Hill, who, with his wife, watched from Eagle Point the progress of events. "When I was down to-day I heard he was trying to have his tenants clean up and make his corner look better, but beer and tobacco and dirt are pretty likely to go together.

"I went to see how Thad was coming on, and there he was, wide awake as ever, leading his men, and inspiring them to do their level best. Ben Arles was there, looking a hundred per cent. better than when we saw him at Mr. Anslow's."

"And Cousin Luke?"

"He is well, and everything is going well with him. Hilliard is doing a rushing business in lumber, making a regular monthly payment out of his share of the profits. Grace does the bookkeeping, besides running a small wood-yard on her own account."

"She is a nice girl. When she was up here with Tamson, I thought, if I was a young man, I shouldn't know which to choose."

"It would be easier to choose than to win. They will be in no hurry to give their happiness into the hands of another. Tamson has saved her father, her mother, and her home, and Grace has done as much for her family, besides helping to save her brother. Do you remember

the day Tamson walked up here on the snow-crust?"

"Certainly I do. I shall never forget that day. Stafford had just started here, and it seemed as though everything was going wrong, but since then everything except Stafford's Corner and the brewery has changed for the better."

"That is true, Prudence, and if we live ten years we shall see greater changes."

Ten years have passed. The prophecy has been fulfilled. The changes have been many and great; for most of which the people have reason to be profoundly grateful.

The brewery is still there. Stafford has become a wealthy man, but his social relations are all outside of the town, which, despite his business, is considered the strongest temperance town in the county.

The younger members of the community are especially enthusiastic and persistent in their crusade against beer and tobacco; able at all times to give a reason for engaging in this crusade.

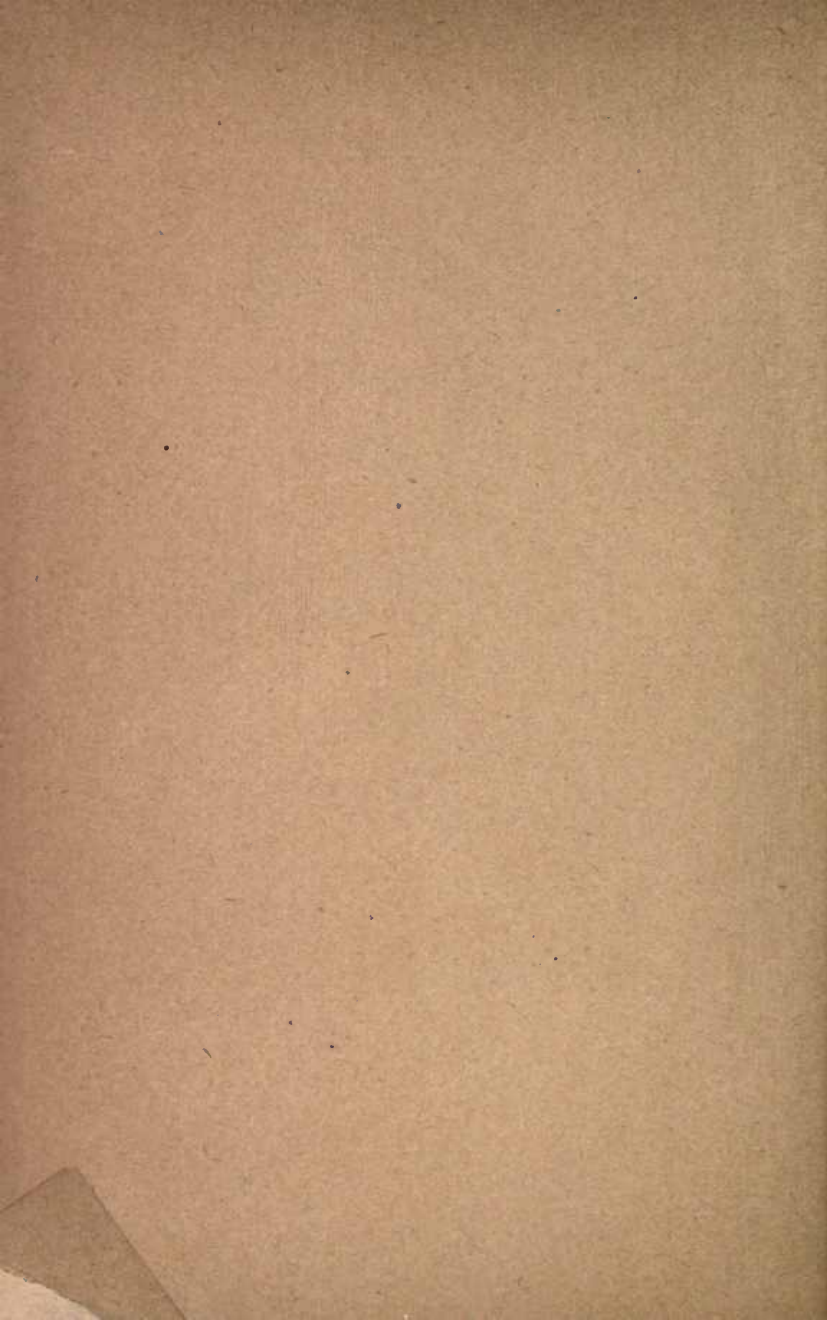
The mystery in regard to the tracts and leaflets which had done so much toward creating a healthy public sentiment on this question, has been solved. The names of families and individuals were given to a summer visitor by a woman no one would suspect of being in any

way concerned. This visitor had given the literature from time to time to a friend who forwarded it in such a way that no postmark betrayed the sender.

The Brenner place has been cleared of debt ; Mr. Anslow having been paid every dollar advanced by him. This gentleman and his sister have lived to rejoice in the prosperity of their protégé, Ben Arles, who, by the death of his mother, has come into possession of a comfortable fortune, he is most happy to share with his wife, brave Grace Hilliard.

At Eagle Point, Jacob and Prudence Hill still keep watch and ward over the interests of their friends ; ready at any time to lend a helping hand wherever help is required. Their last days promise to be their best days ; as do the last days of Mrs. Byam promise to give her more of happiness than she has known before.

The old bench under the lindens stands firm, with props steady and strong. Here often may be seen an old man, who counts his years four-score and more, but who forgets his age as he looks into the upturned face of his grandson and namesake, "Luke Brenner Byam."



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